



# THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

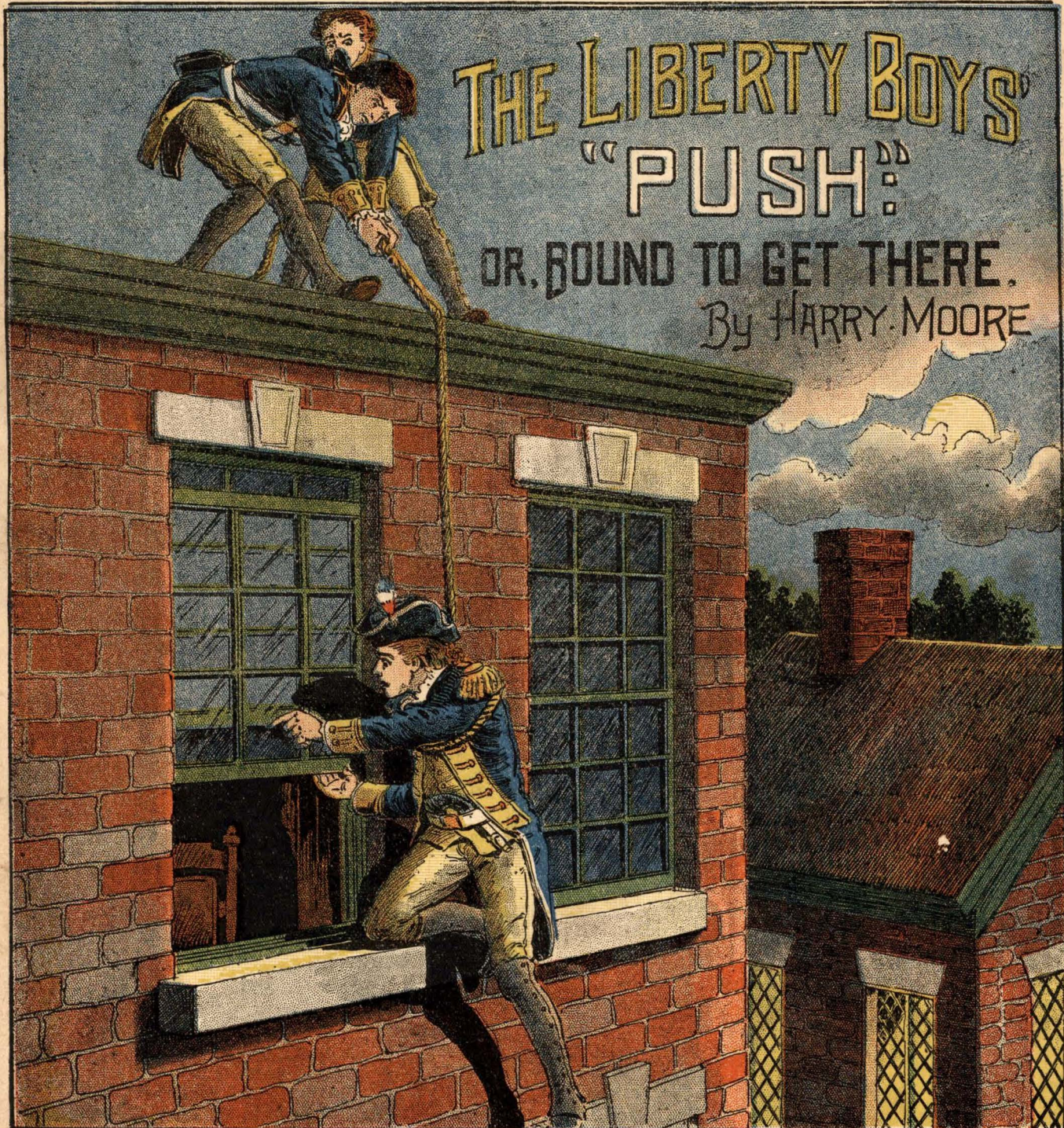
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No. 57.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 31, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' "PUSH:" OR, BOUND TO GET THERE. By HARRY MOORE



The two Liberty Boys lowered Dick till his knee rested on the window-sill. Dick raised the window and made ready to enter the room.



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## CHAPTER I.

### GEORGE GRADY, THE AVENGER.

A bronzed and handsome young fellow of perhaps twenty years was riding along the highway a few miles from Savannah, Georgia, one beautiful afternoon in mid-summer of the year 1779. This young man had clean-cut features, a firm chin, clear, blue-gray eyes, in which shone frankness, honesty and honor. He was dressed in a rough suit of ordinary citizen's clothing, and if he was armed—which was, no doubt, the case, since nobody went unarmed in those days—his weapons did not show. Doubtless they were hidden underneath the skirts of the coat.

The youth was mounted upon a magnificent black charger—an animal which showed that the finest Arabian blood flowed in his veins. That he was a thoroughbred was evident at a glance. One might have traveled many miles without finding a horse the equal of this one.

The horse was going along at an easy gallop when suddenly as they rounded a bend in the road—which was here bordered on both sides by heavy timber—the youthful rider came in full sight of a scene which sent the blood flying through his veins at race-horse speed.

A hundred yards distant was a group of horsemen. There were at least eleven of the horsemen, and ten of them were British soldiers—as was evidenced by their brilliant scarlet uniforms. The other member of the group was dressed in citizen's clothes.

The group was not standing still, however, but was in fierce and rapid action, and it took but a glance from the youth mounted on the black charger to see that the one man, who was dressed like himself, was engaged in a most unequal combat with the British troopers. He had a sword in his right hand and also one in his left, and he was wielding both weapons with marvelous swiftness and dexterity, and even as the newcomer appeared on the scene he saw two of the redcoats fall from their horses, cleaved from chin to waist by the terrible strokes. As the strange and wonderful fighter, who was contending single-handed and alone with the party of redcoats,

fought, he kept crying out in fierce and exulting tones: "Take that!—and that!"

"Have at you, cowards, scoundrelly minions of a tyrant king!"

"Ha! I got you that time, you murderer!"

"Down with the king!"

"Take that, with the compliments of George Grady!"

"Ha! thus I revenge myself upon you and avenge the deaths of my father, mother, sister and brother!"

The newcomer heard these exclamations from the lone fighter as he approached, and was the witness of some of the most wonderful fighting he had ever seen. The man seemed to bear a charmed life. The redcoats, uttering wild cries and curses, tried to cut him down, but were unable to do so. Those two terrible swords were always interposed and then they would whistle and swish through the air and a trooper would fall from his horse or receive a disabling wound. Still it was such an uneven combat that the newcomer did not think it possible the one desperate man could whip the entire party of redcoats, and he decided to take a hand. Quick as a flash he drew two pistols and dashed forward at renewed speed.

"At them, Major!" he cried to the horse, and then, in a loud, thrilling voice, he cried:

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

As the thrilling war-cry of "The Liberty Boys of '76" went up an answering shout came from the man with the two swords.

"Glory, hallelujah!" he cried. "Reinforcements are at hand and not a redcoat fiend shall escape! At them, friend, and give it to the scoundrels. They murdered my parents, my sister and my brother and I have sworn to be avenged bitterly upon them! At them, and do not spare a single one of the dogs!"

"Down with the king!" the newcomer responded, and then in quick succession he fired both pistols.

Crack!—crack!

Although riding at full speed when he fired the shots were true, and two of the redcoats fell from their saddles and the riderless horses dashed away up the road in the direction of Savannah.

All of the redcoats save three were now down, and the



three in question were seized with sudden, overpowering terror, and uttering wild yells of fright they urged their horses away, going up the road in the direction taken by the riderless steeds. The lone fighter, who called himself "George Grady," was not willing they should escape, however, and he dashed after them, calling to his unknown friend: "Come, friend! Come; let us not permit a single dog of a murderer to escape!"

With a glance at the dead and wounded troopers lying on the ground, the young man rode after Grady at full speed. His magnificent black charger rapidly overtook the horse of the other and soon they were side by side. The man, wild-eyed and hatless, turned his burning glance on the young stranger.

"Friend, if you are a friend of Liberty and have parents and mayhap sisters and brothers of your own let me have the use of your horse for fifteen minutes, I beg of you. I see that he is a thoroughbred, a magnificent animal, and I want to overtake those cowardly hounds!"

"Very well; I will exchange with you. It will take but an instant. Stop as soon as you like and I will do the same."

The man brought his horse to a stop quickly and leaped to the ground, the other doing likewise; then each remounted, but on the other's horse, and then they darted forward again. But the black charger rapidly left the other horse behind. The man urged him onward with cries of encouragement and pappings on the neck, and the fugitives were being overtaken with wonderful rapidity.

Soon the man of such terrible valor was close upon the three; then he reached them and swish, swish! went one of the swords—the other having been returned to the scabbard—and two of the troopers fell to the ground, dead, their heads being severed from their bodies.

"Halt!" roared Brady. "Halt and surrender, or die!"

One wild glance the trooper gave the Nemesis at his side and brought his horse to a stop.

"I surrender!" he cried, tremblingly. "Don't kill me!"

"Oho! you beg for mercy, do you?" was the fierce and scornful reply of the man as he brought his horse to a stop and sat the animal, facing the frightened redcoat.

"Yes, yes; I beg for mercy! I surrender; don't kill me!"

"And what mercy did you fiends show to the defenseless women and children who were butchered by you and the red fiends, the Cherokees, when you were marching through the country not long ago?"

"Oh!—oh! I—I—didn't kill any—any women and—children!"

George Grady laughed sneeringly and unbelievably.

"Of course you would say so," he said; "you would lie like a dog to save your worthless life. That is the way with you redecoated fiends."

"I—I—swear that I—that I never killed any w-women or c-children!"

At this moment the young man who had come to Grady's assistance reached the spot, and the latter turned to him, and, with a smile, said:

"I thank you, young man, for coming to my assistance and for lending me your splendid horse. But for this animal," patting Major on the neck almost lovingly, "I could not have overtaken these scoundrels; and that would have been a disappointment, for I have sworn to kill every redcoat that I can get within reach of with my trusty swords."

The redcoat who had been spared looked at the man and shuddered. Doubtless he wondered what kind of a man he was who would attack ten British troopers single-handed and alone.

"You are entirely welcome to what little assistance either I or my horse rendered," was the pleasant reply; "I will say that under ordinary circumstances I should have refused to let you have the horse to pursue the fleeing enemy, but I heard you say that your parents and your sister and brother had been murdered by the redcoats, and when you asked me I could not refuse."

The other bowed. "I understand your feelings in the matter," was the reply; "it is natural that one who has not the incentive that I have would not care to carry the thing to such an extreme, and would have been content to thrash the enemy and dispose of a goodly number of them; but with me, who have lost father, mother, sister and brother at the hands of the scoundrels, it is impossible that I can be satisfied to stop as long as there is a redcoat in sight—and I would have killed you!" turning fiercely upon the trembling trooper and shaking the point of the sword in his very face, "were it not that I wish to use you!"

"W-what d-do you w-want me to d-do?" stammered the trooper.

"I wish you to carry a message from me to the commandant at Savannah."

"A message?"

"Yes; a message of defiance—a statement to the effect that henceforth there is an avenger on the track of the British in the vicinity of Savannah. I wish you to tell Prevost, the hound who permitted the dastardly work of the soldiers and their Indian allies, that a hundred—yes, five hundred British lives shall pay the forfeit for the



deaths of the parents, sister and brother of George Grady, the Avenger! And I wish you to tell him that if ever I get him within reach of my sword, I will cut his head from his shoulders at a single sweep of the blade—thus!" and the man made a sweeping stroke in the air, the point of the weapon coming within an inch of the trooper's nose and causing him to throw himself back with such suddenness and vigor as to almost fall off his horse.

"I—I'll t-tell h-him!" he stammered, glaring with eyes of terror upon the deadly, blood-stained weapon that had done such terrible work among his comrades.

"See that you do!—and tell him that if ever I catch sight of him when he is in the midst of his soldiers, I will cut him down if I have to hew my way to him and am killed the next instant! Will you tell him that?"

"Y-yes, yes; I'll t-tell h-him!"

The trooper's face was white with fear, and he was trembling so his teeth chattered. He stared at the fierce face of the terrible avenger as if fascinated, reminding one of a bird gazing into the eyes of a snake under whose spell it has come—only in this instance the snake was the redcoat and the bird was a giant eagle that had turned the tables and thrown a spell of terror over the other.

George Grady was silent a few moments, thinking, and then he looked sternly at the trooper and said: "What is your name?"

"Thomas Haven."

"Thomas Haven, eh?"

"Y-yes, sir."

"Well, Thomas Haven, I wish to tell you something: I shall remember your name, and I have your face indelibly stamped on my memory. If I were to meet you again, ten years hence, I should recognize you; and I am going to tell you something. I spare your life now in order that you may carry my message to Prevost and to all your comrades in Savannah. If you fail to tell them just what I have told you to tell them then I shall, at some future time, kill you! Do you understand?"

"Y-yes; I understand. I—I'll t-tell just what you want me to, sir."

"Very well; see that you do. Now you may go—and don't look behind you, whatever you do; and don't stop till you are in the city and at headquarters."

"I—I'll do just as you say, sir."

"And look out for me in the future. If I meet you again outside the city I shall not spare you!"

"I'll not come outside the city limits again soon if I can help it!" was the reply, in a tone which evidenced the speaker's complete sincerity.

Then he rode away in the direction of Savannah—and if he felt any inclination to look back he overcame it, for he never turned his head.

As soon as the trooper was gone George Grady extended his hand to the young man who had come to his assistance and said:

"I thank you, sir, for your kindly assistance. I am your friend for life. I judge, from the war-cry to which you gave utterance as you attacked the redcoats back yonder, that you are, like myself, a patriot. Is it not so?"

"It is, indeed," replied the young man as he took the other's hand and shook it heartily; "I am a patriot."

"Will you be so kind as to tell me your name? I wish to know whom I am to thank, and to whom I am indebted."

"Yes, indeed; it will give me great pleasure to tell you who I am, but you are not indebted to me in any degree. I am always glad of an opportunity to strike a blow at the British, and, consequently, in behalf of the great cause of Liberty, so I am, if anything, indebted to you."

"No, no; not at all. It is the other way—but your name, sir?"

"My name is Dick Slater."

George Grady uttered an exclamation.

"What!" he cried. "Do you say your name is Dick Slater? Are you—surely you are not the great scout, spy and the captain of that wonderful band of fighters, 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' whom we have heard so much about?"

Dick Slater, for it was indeed he, smiled and replied: "Yes, I am the Dick Slater in question, though I hardly think I can lay claim to being great in any respect."

"Shake hands again!" cried Grady. "You are the one man of all other whom I most wished to see. Shake hands, Dick Slater! I am indeed glad to know you, and I hope our acquaintance will continue for many months and years."

"I hope so, Mr. Grady, and—but look yonder! There come a party of redcoats! We will have to look out for ourselves!"

The redcoats set up a wild yell as soon as their eyes fell upon the two.

## CHAPTER II.

### ANOTHER PARTY OF REDCOATS APPEARS.

The redcoat whom George Grady had let go for the purpose of using him as a message-bearer, rode onward to—



ward Savannah at a gallop. As he rode he was thinking—thinking of the terrible avenger who had cut down a number of the troopers and who threatened to have the lives of a hundred, yes, five hundred British soldiers in payment for the lives of his parents, sister and brother.

"And I can't say that I blame him for feeling as he does," thought the trooper, who was really not such a bad fellow at heart; "I suppose I should feel the same way if I were in his shoes—but, great Jove! I don't want to ever meet him again. Whish!—off will go my head if he gets in reach of me with those terrible swords of his. Did any one ever see such a demon in a fight? Just to think of it—a man with a big sword in each hand, cutting and slashing like mad! Ugh! it makes me shudder when I think of it; and if I have my way I won't ever come in reach of George Grady, the Avenger, again."

The trooper had rounded the bend in the road by this time, and looking ahead he saw a body of horsemen approaching. "There come some more of the boys," he muttered; "they will want we to go back with them, but I shall not do it. No, not for all the wealth of King George would I venture back within reach of the sword of that demon rebel! I will tell them what has occurred, and then if they want to go on and try to kill or capture Grady, all right. I have business in Savannah."

As the lone redcoat and the party of troopers were riding toward each other, they were soon close together. When they met all came to a stop.

"Hello, there, Haven!" called out the leader of the party, a man wearing the uniform of a captain. "Where are the rest of the boys?"

"Dead!" replied the trooper.

The members of the party looked at Haven in amazement, and then at one another. Evidently they hardly knew what to think.

"What's that you say?" presently cried Captain Ravenscraft. "You are just fooling!"

The trooper shook his head, sadly. "I wish I were only fooling!" he said.

The captain's face sobered. "You don't really mean to tell me that the boys are all dead?" he cried.

Haven nodded. "I do mean to tell you that very thing. They are either dead or terribly wounded."

"But where are they?" in excitement. "And how did it happen?"

"Back up the road here, half a mile or so you will find two, with their heads cut clean off their shoulders; and a mile beyond you will find the rest—that is where

the real combat took place. He gave chase to us and killed the two when he caught up with us."

"He!" almost thundered the captain, while the men stared at Haven as if they thought him crazy. "What are you talking about? Were there not ten of you?"

"Yes; but there is only one now—and, thank goodness, that one is myself!"

"I know; but what do you mean by saying, 'he'? Of course, you cannot mean that the ten of you were practically annihilated by one man!"

"Yes, I do mean to say that very thing! There was only one man—that is, at first. Another fellow did come to his assistance a little later and shot a couple of the boys. The others all fell at the hands of the one man, however."

"One man! Good Jupiter, what do you mean? No one man could have done such a thing!"

"This man did it."

"Who and what was he, or is he, then, that he should be able to do such a thing? Is he a mail-clad giant?"

"No, there was no mail on him that I could see, but he had a sword in each hand, and——"

"A sword in each hand?"

"Yes; and he whirled them around and around, and cut and slashed so swiftly that it seemed almost as if there was a solid wall of steel around him. It was impossible to get close enough to damage him without getting dangerously cut, and the boys who tried it suffered as a result, and two or three of them were split from the tops of their head to their waist-line, and one or two had their heads cut off!"

The troopers listened in open-mouthed horror and amazement, and exclamations of wonder escaped them.

"A regular demon!"

"Fights with two swords!"

"And he killed nine of the boys!"

"I wouldn't have believed such a thing possible!"

"But how comes it you were allowed to escape, Haven?" asked Captain Ravenscraft.

"I'll tell you how it happened," was the reply, and he proceeded to do so. Exclamations escaped the lips of all as they listened, and when he had finished they looked at one another blankly.

"An avenger, eh?" said Captain Ravenscraft, a grim look on his rather evil face; "well, if I get within reach of him with my trusty sword in hand, I will agree to make him the late Mr. Grady, ex-Avenger, in a hurry!"

Haven shook his head dubiously. "Don't be too sure of it, captain," he said; "you can have no idea what a demon in battle he is until after you have seen him,



and you will pardon me if I say that I don't believe there is a man in the entire king's army that could stand before him."

"Bosh! you are frightened, Haven. Just let me get a chance at him and I will show you that he is not such a wonderful man. I should be very much astonished if I were to find my match as a swordsman among the American boors who know nothing of the art."

"He may not be so skilled in sword-play, Captain Ravencraft, but he is a mighty man with the sword, just the same, and it will go hard with the man that comes within reach of his weapon, be he ever so fine a swordsman—but if you wish to put the matter to test just ride onward around the bend as quickly as possible and you may succeed in getting a chance at him. I left him and his companion there only a few minutes ago."

"We will go at once!" cried the captain. "Will you accompany us?"

"Not I! I would not go within reach of his sword for a thousand pounds—and, besides, I have a message to take to General Prevost."

"All right; go on to the general with the message, and tell him, from me, that I will bring him the head of this boaster, this would-be avenger, when I return!"

"I'll tell him what you say, but if I were a betting man I would be willing to lay you a wager of ten to one that you do not bring back George Grady's head."

"You certainly have a high opinion of the rebel, Haven."

"I have met him!" was the significant reply. "You will entertain a much higher opinion of his abilities ere long, or I miss my guess."

"Bah! Forward, men!"

Then the party, which consisted of about twenty men, dashed forward, while Haven, after a glance after them over his shoulder, continued on his way.

"I would give a pretty shilling to be a witness to the meeting between Grady and Captain Ravencraft, if they do meet," he muttered; "but the avenger told me to go to Savannah and take his message as quickly as possible, and to not look behind me, and I think I shall obey orders."

Onward dashed the party of troopers. As they rode around the bend in the road they came in sight of the two horsemen in the road a quarter of a mile distant. They gave utterance to a shout and dashed forward, as has been stated in the preceding chapter, but they had gone but a short distance when Captain Ravencraft called a halt.

"Hold, men!" he said. "Yonder is that fellow Grady, the so-called avenger, and I wish to kill or capture him

single-handed and alone. If we all go forward any farther he will flee, and I don't wish that to happen. His days might as well be ended right here and now. Wait here and I will go forward and challenge him to mortal combat."

"But remember what Haven said, captain," said one of the men; "don't you think it would be safer and better for us to charge them—you see there are two—and in that manner we may be able to get both of them."

"Bah! Haven was frightened half to death. He isn't, nor ever was, much of a warrior. I can settle this avenger and not half try, and I am not going to risk his taking flight and getting away from me. Stay here and see how nicely I will spit the rebel!"

Then he rode forward, alone, waving a white pocket handkerchief.

It so happened that this was done before Dick and George Grady had decided what course to pursue. They were sitting quietly on their horses, watching the approaching redcoats, when the party suddenly halted. The two eyed the enemy critically.

"What are they up to now?" asked Dick, wonderingly.

"To some trick, you may be sure," was Grady's reply as his hand fondled the hilt of one of his swords; "trust the cowardly scoundrels for that!"

"I don't see what better course they can pursue than to have come right onward at full speed as they were doing and give chase to us, do you?"

"That is what I would have thought they would do."

Just then Captain Ravencraft rode forward, leaving the rest behind, and as they saw the white handkerchief, Dick said: "A flag of truce. He wishes to talk to us."

"Humph! so he does. I'd much rather fight him than talk to him."

There was a fierceness in Grady's look and tones which proved he meant what he said.

The two sat quietly in their saddles and waited till the redcoat was within twenty feet of them. Then Ravencraft brought his horse to a stop and looked from one to the other of the two horsemen, inquiringly.

"Which of you two fellows is the one who calls himself George Grady, the Avenger?" he asked, in a sneering and supercilious manner and tone.

Instantly a glint of fire shot from the eyes of George Grady, and he spurred his horse a pace forward, at the same time drawing his sword and causing it to fairly swish through the air. He had detected the sneer in the other's tone and manner, and resented it.

"I'm George Grady, the Avenger!" he cried promptly.



his voice ringing out clearly—so clearly, in fact, that the troopers in the distance heard what he said and looked at one another dubiously. "What will you have with me?"

"I wish to ask you a few questions, first, and then I shall have something to say to you," was the reply.

"What are the questions?" Grady glared into the eyes of the redcoat captain in a manner to disconcert that gentleman considerably, despite his boasted nerve. There was something so fierce, so deadly and threatening withal that the Briton was slightly awed in spite of himself.

"I met one of our men back yonder a ways and he told me a very strange story—to the effect that a fellow calling himself 'George Grady, the Avenger,' had met himself and nine comrades and had killed nine of them. Is it true?"

"It is true!" was the prompt reply; "and before many days have passed I shall make it ninety-nine!"

"Bah! you will do nothing of the kind. Your career is destined to come to an abrupt termination, Sir Avenger!" Then the captain's eyes fell upon the headless bodies of the two dead troopers, and a dark frown came over his face. He pointed his finger at the headless trunks and asked: "Is that your work?"

"It is!" was the prompt reply; "and I am eager to do more of it—for know you, cursed minion of a tyrant king, that my parents, sister and brother were murdered by your redcoated fiends, and their blood is calling aloud for vengeance!"

"And you want more victims, do you?" almost hissed Captain Ravencraft.

"That I do, you British hound!" There was a terrible fire in the eyes of George Grady.

"Very well; then if you are a brave man and not a boasting coward, you may have the opportunity which you say you crave, for know you, Sir Avenger, that I have come here to challenge you to mortal combat!"

"I accept!" cried Grady, a look of savage joy illumining his not unhandsome face. "I accept! Shall we begin now? If so, defend yourself!" and he made as if to attack the captain.

"Hold! Wait till I get one of my men to come forward and act for me. You have a friend present to act for you, and it is only right that I should have."

"Friend or no friend, it matters not. Call one of them, quickly, and I will soon serve you as I have served some of your comrades. All I want is to have at you, sword to sword, and man to man!"

"You will have that opportunity very soon," said the captain, with an attempt at dignified scorn; "and I warn you, Mr. Avenger, that your time has come. You will never split the head of another one of the brave soldiers of the good King George!"

"The fiendish minions of a tyrant king, you mean!"

Captain Ravencraft did not answer, but turned and made a signal and one of the troopers rode forward and soon joined them. The captain spoke a few words to the trooper and then turned to Grady.

"Shall we have it out on horseback or on foot?" he asked.

"On foot," was the reply; "this is the horse of my friend, here, and I do not wish to run the risk of causing him to be injured."

"Very well; it is immaterial to me. On foot it is!"

Both dismounted and then a moment later stood facing each other in the middle of the road, sword in hand.

The next instant they were at it like fiends.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A FIERCE DUEL.

Captain Ravencraft had intended to play with the insolent "rebel" as a cat would with a mouse, for a few minutes, to torture him thus and then run him through and put an end to him, but somehow he did not put his plan into execution. The despised "rebel" attacked him with such fury that he was forced to fight on the defensive from the very first, and he had to give ground, again and again, to keep from being cut down by the terrible blade of his still more terrible opponent.

Dick and the redcoat, who was seconding the captain, watched the combat with eager interest. Neither of them had ever seen such a fierce duel. They could not follow the movements of the leaping, whirling swords—their eyes were not quick enough. How Captain Ravencraft managed to defend himself against the sword of George Grady for as long as he did was a mystery to the onlookers, and, indeed, if the truth were to be told, it was something of a mystery to the captain himself. He had never seen a weapon move through the air so rapidly and bewilderingly in all his experience, and he was a really good swordsman, too, and had, in his time, been pitted against some of the best men in England.

The strangest part of it, too, to the captain's way of



thinking, was that the "rebel" was not an expert swordsman at all, but it was his wonderful quickness and strength which amply made up for mere skill, and was so disconcerting to his opponent that he scarcely knew what to do.

Ravencraft hoped that George Grady would become weary after a few minutes and be forced to pause in the terrible attack, when he would be able to run the "rebel" through; but he was destined to be disappointed. Grady did not seem to tire a particle—indeed, he seemed to gain strength as he went and to become more and more fierce and terrible with each passing moment. He seemed to be able to read what was passing in the captain's mind, for a grim smile appeared on his face and he said:

"Ha! my brave captain, why don't you cut me down? Why don't you end the days of the Avenger, as you said you would do?"

"I will do it before this thing is ended," was the fierce reply. "Have patience, you shall not be disappointed." This last was bravado, and was intended to have some effect toward breaking the nerve of the "rebel."

But George Grady laughed aloud. "I shall possess my soul in patience, hey?" he cried. "You mean that I shall tire myself out and then you will run me through—is not that what you mean and are thinking that you will do?"

"Well, yes," was the sneering reply; "that is what I have in mind to do, to tell the truth. You certainly cannot keep up the attack long, at this rate, and when you have become so tired that you can no longer wield the sword at such a rate, then shall I run you through!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed George Grady, and the laugh caused a cold chill to travel up Captain Ravencraft's spine; "that is good! So that is what you expect to do, eh? My ignoble representative of a tyrant king and wholesale assassin of innocent women and children, know that I shall not tire! I could keep this up all day if necessary—but it won't be necessary. I shall soon have the supreme satisfaction of splitting you from the top of your head to your waist-line! You cannot escape me, and had better be saying your prayers, if you know any!"

There was something so positive in the fierce patriot's tone that it carried conviction with it, and in spite of himself a terrible feeling of fear took possession of Captain Ravencraft.

"This man is a demon, sure enough, as Haven said!" he thought. "Jove! if he tells the truth, and I begin to believe he does, I am in for it. Great Jupiter! what a death to die—to be split open by this desperado rebel! I must manage in some way to escape. I am not going to lose my life if I can help it!"

From that moment the captain fought with the one object in view of embracing the first opportunity to make his escape. He thought nothing of the disgrace which would attach to him if he should take refuge in flight; indeed, he thought of nothing at all save that his life was in great danger and he must save it.

Clash! clash! clash! The blades rang against each other and the sparks flew. It was a terrible combat, and Captain Ravencraft was forced gradually back until he caught sight of his horse out of the corner of his eye. A thrill went over him. If he could manage to mount he might succeed in getting away.

But how was he to accomplish this? He knew that to try to make such a move while attacked, would result in his death. The rebel would cut him down before he could get into the saddle. Then a thought struck him: Surely Grady would not cut him down when he was unarmed, and he made up his mind to let himself be disarmed, and then while parleying to leap upon the back of the horse and fly.

He put this plan into effect. Suddenly his sword went flying—knocked out of the captain's hand by a stroke from the blade of George Grady. He uttered a cry of simulated dismay.

"Hold!" he exclaimed, as Grady drew back as if to strike. "You will not strike an unarmed man?"

"No!" cried the other, fiercely; "but you shall not escape me! This does not end the affair. I will return your weapon to you and you shall fight it out to the death!"

"That is what I wish to do!" cried the captain, with pretended eagerness; "and I will kill you, too, you boasting rebel! But for this accident you would ere this be dead!"

"Bah! It is you who are the boaster!" was the retort, and Grady stepped to where the sword lay, picked it up and turned to hand it to the owner—only to see Captain Ravencraft riding away like the wind. He had seized the opportunity when his opponent's back was turned to leap into the saddle and away.

A wild cry of anger and disappointment escaped Grady's lips.

"Oh, the coward—the poltroon!" he cried. "Come back here, if you have a spark of manhood in you! Come back and fight it out like a man!"

But the captain had no intention of doing anything of the kind. When he was at a safe distance he brought his horse to a stop and shouted to his men to advance.

"Come on!" he yelled, wildly, "come on; and let's cap-



ture or kill this fiend! Hurry; he must not be permitted to escape us!"

The trooper who had acted as the captain's second had followed that worthy when he fled, and was beside him now. Had he not done so it is probable that Grady would have put an end to him, for he was very angry and greatly disappointed on account of the manner in which the captain had slipped through his fingers.

Dick saw that himself and companion were in great danger, and he called out: "Quick; mount, Mr. Grady! We must be getting away from here!"

Grady obeyed, and, leaping into the saddle, was ready for flight. Whirling their horses' heads toward the north, the two patriots rode away at a swift gallop. They rounded the bend which was about a third of a mile distant, and when they had done so, and their pursuers were temporarily out of sight, Grady said, quickly and eagerly:

"Let us ride into the timber here and charge the scoundrels when they come along. What do you say?"

"All right," replied Dick, who felt such contempt for the cowardly captain that he wished to give Grady a chance to get another chance at him.

This was enough. They halted and rode into the timber and then turned their horses' heads toward the road, and, pistols in hand, awaited the approach of their enemies.

"We will fire off our pistols," said Dick, "and then charge the scoundrels with our swords."

Dick had secured the sword of Captain Ravencraft, and felt that he was very well equipped for business, for the weapon was a good one.

"That is the way to do it!" said Grady, grimly; "and give it to the scoundrels for all you are able, Dick!"

"Trust me for that!"

There was no time for more. The thunder of the hoofbeats sounded close at hand and the next instant the score of horsemen dashed around the bend and were almost abreast the two patriots in a twinkling.

"Fire!" cried Dick, and then crack! crack! crack! crack! rang out the pistol shots and three of the redcoats were seen to fall to the ground, while a fourth reeled and only saved himself by clutching the pommel of the saddle and hanging on like grim death.

"Charge!" roared Grady, and then out of the timber dashed the two, like twin avalanches. Straight toward the company of troopers the two rode, flourishing their swords on high and yelling like Indians.

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!" was Dick's cry.

"Death to the murderers of women and children!" roared Grady. In the hands of the Avenger were two swords, the horse being allowed free rein, and the next instant the horses of the patriots crashed right into the party of redcoats. Then a wonderful, a thrilling scene was enacted. The two swords of Grady's and Dick's one weapon, cut and slashed and described glittering circles in the air, and redcoat after redcoat dropped to the ground, dead or dying. Grady was absolutely terrible in his fury, and he cut the heads from the shoulders of several at single, sweeping strokes.

Consternation seized upon the troopers. They uttered wild yells of terror. "They are fiends!" cried one, starting to flee.

The others took up the cry and as quick as possible they followed the lead of their comrade. Among them was Captain Ravencraft, who was afraid that Grady might get within reach of him, and he knew that if such a thing happened he would lose his head, for it would be impossible to escape from both those whirling, swishing swords.

And, indeed, Grady had made desperate attempts to reach the craven-hearted captain, but had been unable to do so, and a cry of disappointment escaped him as he saw his intended prey escaping him. He would have started in pursuit, but Dick dissuaded him.

"Remember the old saying, 'Build a bridge of gold for a flying enemy,'" he said; "they are too many for us, and we have succeeded in routing them, temporarily, because we took them by surprise. But if we were to follow them they would turn on us and make an end of us. We have done well and should be satisfied; let us go while we have the opportunity."

"Yes, you are right; we have done well," agreed Grady, with a glance at the seven or eight forms lying in the road. "We have done better even than I expected, and I am ready to go. Come on," and he rode away, up the road, Dick keeping alongside.

They had gone perhaps a mile when just as they came opposite the point where a road leading down from the northwest joined the main road a party of British troopers, to the number of a dozen or so, rode out in front of them. In the midst of the troopers, a prisoner, evidently, was a girl of about eighteen years—the most beautiful girl, even though now pale with fright, that they had ever laid eyes on, thought both Dick and George Grady. The instant the girl's eyes fell upon the two she gave utterance to a wild cry for aid.

"Help! help!" she cried, her voice sounding sweet, even



though tremulous with terror. "Oh, save me! Save me from these terrible men!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### EXCITEMENT IN SAVANNAH.

If ever there was an angry man when he had gotten over his fright sufficiently to be possessed by any other feeling, it was Captain Ravencraft when he realized that his party had been put to flight by the two "rebels."

A glance over his shoulder showed him that the terrible Avenger was not pursuing them and his courage came back. He called out for his men to stop, and they presently obeyed, though they were some little time in bringing their horses to a full stop.

"Let us return and give chase to those scoundrels, men!" the captain cried. "Come along. Follow me!"

He turned his horse's head in the opposite direction and rode back to the scene of the encounter, his men following rather reluctantly; but when they came to where their comrades lay, and found that two of the troopers were still alive, though severely wounded, and the captain made this an excuse to stop and not try to pursue the two "rebels," the men were satisfied. They had had all they wanted of the Avenger for that day. A man who fought with two swords, both of which whirled and swished like the flashing lightning, was not the kind of a man they were looking for.

Captain Ravencraft called one man to his side and told him to ride at once to Savannah and return with an ambulance, to be used in conveying the wounded soldiers to the city, and then he sent another in search of a farmhouse where a spade could be borrowed, with which to dig graves for the dead troopers.

The man who was to go to Savannah rode away at a gallop, glad of the opportunity to get out of the vicinity. The other trooper went in search of a farmhouse.

This man was gone but a few minutes when the sound of firing was heard in the distance, to the northward; the redcoats looked at one another inquiringly.

"What is that?" asked one.

"Those demons have encountered some more of our boys, probably," replied another.

"I pity the boys, then!" was the significant reply, and all nodded as if agreeing with this view of the case.

"Haven was right when he said that fellow calling

himself an avenger was a demon, eh, captain?" remarked another of the troopers, and Captain Ravencraft nodded assent.

"He is an incarnate fiend," the officer declared; "I never saw any one like him in my life, before."

"And I hope I never shall again!" said another.

All the rest nodded as if they felt the same way about it; which was, no doubt, the case.

Half an hour later the man who had been sent for a spade returned, bringing the tool, and the men went to work at the side of the road and made an excavation large enough to hold the six dead bodies. When the work of burying their dead comrades was finished they sat down to await the coming of the ambulance.

Two hours passed and then it arrived. The two wounded men were placed in the ambulance and the party set out for the city. When they came to the spot where the two redcoats lay, who had been killed by Grady when he pursued the three, of whom Haven had been one, a halt was called and the dead bodies were interred.

"I had forgotten about these two poor fellows," said Captain Ravencraft; "otherwise we could have had this done an hour ago."

This work done, they started onward again, and an hour later arrived in Savannah. Their coming aroused great excitement and interest, and they were besieged by the soldiers who wished the story of the wonderful "rebel" who fought with two swords, and who styled himself an Avenger. The men scattered, and the stories they told were sufficiently thrilling and startling, to say the least, as they dilated upon everything, as is commonly the case.

Captain Ravencraft received a summons to appear before General Prevost, the commandant, and he hastened to put in an appearance at headquarters. The commandant greeted him somewhat eagerly, and asked him if the stories he had heard regarding a "demon rebel" were true.

"I think they are all true, General Prevost," replied the captain; "I have met this fellow in a hand-to-hand combat, and although I am reputed as good a swordsman as there is in the army, I must confess that had I not had recourse to strategy I should now be lying dead out in the country, a victim of the prowess of this fiend."

"Tell me all about it!" cried Prevost, in excitement. "Jove! this matter must be looked into and the scoundrel must be run down and put to death. Why, do you know, he even had the audacity to send a threatening message to me!"

"You don't mean it?" exclaimed the captain.

"Yes; he sent word by Haven, whose life he spared



for the purpose, that I must look out for myself; and that if he should see me and I were in the midst of my men, he would hew his way to me and cut me down if he were to be killed the next instant."

"He'll do it, too, general!" exclaimed the captain. "Why, he is a demon! He fights with a sword in each hand, and fears nothing."

"Tell me all about him, and your encounter with him."

The officer did so, and when the general learned that George Grady, the Avenger, had, with the assistance of one other, killed fifteen and wounded two of the king's soldiers, his anger knew no bounds.

"He must be hunted down and killed as if he were a mad dog!" the general cried. "Why, he threatens that the lives of five hundred British soldiers shall pay the forfeit for the lives of his parents, sister and brother! Just think of that!—and from the way he is starting out it looks as if he might make his threat good unless a quietus is put to him at once."

"Oh, he will create considerable havoc, at any rate," said the captain.

"But I will put a stop to his career as an avenger! I shall send out parties at once with instructions to search till they find him and then kill him without mercy!"

"That is certainly the thing to do!" agreed Captain Ravencraft.

"And you, captain, shall have charge of one of the parties," declared the general.

"Then I shall ask that you let me have at least fifty men, sir."

"Fifty?"

"Yes, fifty."

"You must have a great opinion of the man's prowess, captain!" There was a slight sneer in the tone.

"So would you have if you had met him as I have," was the impassive reply. "If you will take my advice you will send out no parties made up of fewer than fifty men."

"Very well; just as you say. But I cannot conceive that a man lives who could successfully contend against a dozen British soldiers."

"Well, this is no ordinary man. He is a demon, and is the equal of a dozen ordinary rebel soldiers—at least, that is the way it seems to me. Anyway, to make assurance doubly sure, it will be well to send out parties so large that he will not dare attack them."

"I will do so since you think it best; and I will send them out at once."

The story of the wonderful man who had taken the role of Avenger, and had done such terrible execution among

the British soldiers, was soon known from one end of the city to the other. The redcoats and Tories listened aghast, but there were some patriots who were pleased to hear that the troopers had been handled so severely. Of course, they could not put their feelings into words save among the few whom they knew to be true to the cause of Liberty, but they talked with these few and gave utterance to their pleasure.

It was known also that Prevost was going to send out parties in search of George Grady, the Avenger, for the purpose of killing or capturing him, and while the redcoats and Tories rejoiced at the news, the patriots hoped that the brave man would succeed in making his escape.

There was one household in Savannah where the news—secured in this indirect manner—of the death of the parents, sister and brother of George Grady, was received with sorrow and grief unspeakable. This was in the home of Milton Sloan. He was a strong patriot, but was shrewd enough to keep this fact to himself save in the case of the few whom he knew to be true patriots. Mr. and Mrs. Sloan were life-long friends of Mr. and Mrs. Grady, the parents of George; and Lizzie Sloan, the eighteen-year-old daughter was like a sister to Alice Grady, and was often at her home, visiting, and Alice was in the city to visit Lizzie frequently. It had been only two weeks since Alice was there, and the news that she, in common with her parents and brother Tom, were dead, came upon them like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. Lizzie sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Oh, mother, father, isn't it terrible!" she sobbed. "To think that they are dead and that we will never see any of them again! Oh, those awful—those terrible redcoats!"

"Perhaps the Indians that were with Prevost did the terrible work," said Mrs. Sloan; "we heard that the Cherokees were along and committed some terrible deeds of that kind, you know."

"No, it must have been the redcoats; else why would George be after them for vengeance? He must know that the redcoats did it."

"He might be mistaken, Lizzie."

"I'll warrant you he isn't," said Mr. Sloan; "George is a fellow who generally knows what he is about, and I will wager that he has knowledge of the facts."

"I am sure of it, father," said Lizzie; "and I am glad he has killed some of the redcoats, and I hope he will live to do what he has threatened to do."

"I fear he won't, though," said Mr. Sloan, soberly; "you know the British are going to go out in search of him, in parties of fifty, and he will be hunted like a fox."



"Oh, father!" exclaimed Lizzie, her face paling. "If those parties are sent out right away, and George knows nothing of what is being done, they may take him by surprise and encompass his death!"

Mr. Sloan nodded. "I fear that something of the kind may happen," he said; "George will not be looking for such a thing and may be taken unawares. If he could be warned now he——"

"That's it, father!" broke in Lizzie. "He must be warned! I am going to go at once and tell him of the terrible danger which threatens him."

"What! You, Lizzie?—a mere girl, and in these dangerous and troublous times?" cried her mother. "You must not think of such a thing!"

"Oh, but I must go, mother! Just think of the danger George is in—and think of me, in case he should be killed!"

"Think of you, Lizzie? What do you mean?"

"I mean, mother, that I love George—love him with all my heart, and that if he should be killed, I, too, should die; so there is every reason why I should go and warn him."

"You love George, Lizzie?" cried her parents, in unison.

"Yes, mother, father."

"Has he ever spoken of love to you, dear?" asked Mrs. Sloan.

The girl blushed. "Yes, mother; the last time I was out there he did. He is very reserved and backward, as you know, but he—he told me that—that he—loved me."

The father and mother looked at each other in silence. They had no objections to George Grady for a son-in-law, for he was a fine, manly, honorable young fellow, but they saw that it would be impossible to dissuade Lizzie from going on this trip which she wished to take, now that they knew the reason influencing her.

"Perhaps I had better go and warn George, Lizzie," said Mr. Sloan, after a few moments of silence.

"No, you must not, Milton!" said his wife, hastily. "You know that, being a man, you would be suspected; and to be suspected is almost equivalent to being executed as a patriot and spy. No; if any one goes it had better be Lizzie, as she has been through the lines a number of times since the British have occupied Savannah and has never been interfered with."

"Mother is right, father," said Lizzie; "I shall be in no danger and can do the work quickly and easily. You go and bridle and saddle Selim and bring him around in front of the house at once. I will get ready and will start on the trip immediately."

"Very well, Lizzie."

Her father left the house to bridle and saddle Selim,

and the girl began making hasty preparations for her trip. The preparations were soon made, as all that was necessary was for her to don her riding habit; and, ten minutes later, after being hugged and kissed by her parents and given repeated cautionings, she rode swiftly away.

As Lizzie rode down the street she passed one point where the redcoats were getting ready to go into the country in search of George Grady, the Avenger. This was the party that was to be under the command of Captain Ravencraft, and as his eyes fell upon Lizzie riding along at a gallop, an exclamation escaped him.

"Jove! boys, yonder goes that beautiful girl, Lizzie Sloan!" he cried. "She is going into the country for a ride. I am going to have a ride with her, if I get reprimanded from headquarters for neglecting my duty. You boys come right on up the main road leading toward the north, as soon as you are ready, and I will join you when you are two or three miles out. Understand?"

"Yes, yes; that's all right. Go on, captain!" was the reply.

Now, Captain Ravencraft fancied he was quite a lady-killer, and had, indeed, made an impression on the hearts of a number of the Tory maidens of Savannah, but his eyes had chanced to fall upon the beautiful face of Lizzie Sloan, and he was smitten at once. He had made advances, but had been rebuffed, but this only increased his ardor, and he was vain and egotistic enough to think that this was only coquetry on the part of the girl and that she was doing it to lead him on. He could not conceive how any girl could look upon his handsome face and not love the owner. This being the case, he hastened to mount and ride after Lizzie.

The girl was a couple of blocks ahead, but the captain urged his horse forward at a swift gallop. Lizzie heard the hoofbeats, presently, and looked back.

"It is that detestable Captain Ravencraft!" she said to herself in dismay. "He seems determined to accompany me—and at this time of all times. I must not permit it—I must thwart him in some way. But how? Ah, I have it! I will challenge him to a race, and as Selim is much faster than his ungainly charger, I shall be able to run away from him. Yes, that is the thing to do!"

Lizzie saw that she was almost to the picket line, and when the sentinel challenged her she smiled at him and said: "The captain, yonder, and I are going into the country for a ride, and I am going to banter him for a race."

The sentinel smiled, and, saluting, stepped aside and let



her pass, and then Lizzie turned and called out to the officer:

"I challenge you to a race, Captain Ravencraft!"

Then she urged Selim forward and the noble animal darted forward at a wonderful pace. A curse escaped the lips of the doughty captain as he heard the girl's words and saw her action.

"Blast it!" he cried, "I can't catch up with her and she knows it. That horse of hers is a thoroughbred, while this one is a clumsy beast of common farm-yard style. However, I'll give her a chase, anyway. Perhaps the horse may not have staying qualities, after all."

So the captain put spurs to his charger and thundered up the road in pursuit of the girl, watched by the sentinel, who grinned and muttered: "I don't think you'll ride with that girl to-day, captain."

The sentinel's prognostication proved to be correct. The captain was rapidly left behind in the race, and seeing that he had no chance to overtake the girl if she continued at the speed she was going, he called out to her:

"Enough! I acknowledge defeat! Stop and wait for me!"

Lizzie heard, but she did not heed. She did not let on that she heard, but smiling in a satisfied way, she kept right on going at the swift pace which was carrying her away from the man she detested and whom she wished to get rid of as quickly as possible.

Onward she rode, like the wind, and presently seeing that the girl had no intention of waiting for him, Captain Ravencraft brought his horse to a stop and giving utterance to a curse of anger and disappointment, turned the animal's head in the other direction and rode back toward Savannah.

"Didn't you catch her, Captain Ravencraft?" asked the sentinel, with a stolid face but laughing in his sleeve.

"No, curse the luck!" was the reply; "it would almost look as if she did not wish my company—though that is absurd, for when is there any girl who would refuse the company of a king's officer?"

"Perhaps her horse was running away with her, captain," suggested the sentinel, with a covert grin.

"Such a thing is probable," and the captain rode onward.

"I rather think the girl didn't want to ride with you, Captain Ravencraft," muttered the sentinel; "certainly if she knew you as well as I do she wouldn't wish to do so."

Then he resumed the work of pacing backward and forward on his beat.

## CHAPTER V.

### DICK SLATER AND GEORGE GRADY TO THE RESCUE.

Dick Slater and George Grady were not the men to turn a deaf ear to the cry of distress from any one and much less would they do so when the one in trouble was a weak and helpless maiden.

"The cowardly scoundrels!" grated George. "They are up to some more of their devilish work against helpless women and children!"

"Charge!" cried Dick, in a loud, ringing voice.

They had reloaded their pistols while riding along the road and now they drew the weapons; and as they charged down upon the band of startled and amazed redcoats they fired the four shots in rapid succession.

Three redcoats went down, the three stricken by the bullets being on the outer edge of the party as the two had been careful to aim there for fear they might hit the girl.

Thrusting the pistols back into their belts the two patriots drew their swords and in an instant were among the redcoats and laying about them with desperate energy and fury.

It had all happened so quickly that the troopers hardly knew what was going on till after four or five of their number had gone down, and then they were so frightened by the terrible fury of their opponents that they did not offer to fight, but took refuge in flight. They rode like mad in the direction of Savannah, and, leaving Dick to look after the girl, George Grady rode after the fugitives.

He overtook and cut down two of the frightened troopers, but the others were mounted on horses at least the equal of his own, and he could not overtake them; as soon as he became convinced of this he turned his horse and rode back to where Dick and the girl were waiting for him.

The girl had been tied in the saddle and her arms were tied behind her back, but Dick quickly cut her bonds and freed her. She glanced down upon the dead bodies of the redcoats and shuddered, and then looked after the fleeing troopers and the man in pursuit.

"Goodness!" she gasped, as she saw Grady's sword describe a circle through the air and sever the head of one of the redcoats from the body. "Oh, what a terrible man your friend is!—see! he has cut off the head of another of the redcoats!"

"He has had provocation, and there is ample excuse for him, miss," said Dick, quietly; "the redcoats murdered his parents, sister and brother, and he has sworn to be



avenged and to have a hundred lives for the lives of those whom he loved. Do you blame him? I cannot."

"No, no! Murdered his parents, sister and brother, you say? Oh, that is terrible!"

"Yes, indeed, it is terrible to think of, miss."

"And there is no knowing what might have been my own fate if you two brave gentlemen had not rescued me," murmured the girl. "No, I cannot blame him for killing as many of the redcoats as he can. Poor, poor fellow!"

"What is your name, miss, if I may ask, and where do you live?"

"My name is Ethel Mumford, and I live about two miles from here, up the side road."

"How came you to be captured by the redcoats, Miss Mumford?"

"I was at home alone—save for a couple of negro servants—father and mother having gone to the home of a neighbor to spend the day, and those dreadful redcoats came, and, after taking a few articles of value that could be easily carried, they made a prisoner of me; and when they got ready to leave, brought me along with them. I protested, but it did no good. They only laughed at me."

"The scoundrels!"

"That is certainly what they are, sir; and now, if you will be so kind, I would like to know to whom I am indebted for my rescue?"

"My name is Slater, Miss Mumford—Dick Slater, and——"

"Oh!" interrupted the girl, her beautiful eyes shining eagerly; "are you the great Dick Slater, the patriot scout, spy and captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' of whom we have heard so much?"

"I am the Dick Slater you speak of, miss, but," with a smile, "I cannot say that I am in any way great. My companion's name is George Grady, and he lives not far from here, as I understand it."

"I have heard of the Gradys," said Ethel; "they lived on the main road leading from Charleston to Savannah."

"You are right, I think; and that is how it happened that his folks were murdered. General Prevost seems to encourage his men in their cruelties and atrocities."

"Yes; and there were a lot of those horrid, murderous Cherokee Indians with his army, too, so I have heard father say, and they killed and scalped almost without hindrance."

George Grady reached the spot where they were, at this moment, and Dick introduced him to Ethel Mumford, who thanked him earnestly and pleasantly for aiding in her

rescue. She gave him her hand and looking into his eyes with a great sympathy shining there, said: "Mr. Slater has told me about—about—your terrible misfortune in losing your parents and sister and brother. I—I am so—so sorry!" Her voice trembled and the tears came into her beautiful eyes. George was moved, and his voice trembled somewhat as he said:

"Thank you, Miss Mumford! It is, indeed, terrible, as you say—terrible to lose all of one's loved ones at a single fell sweep. But I shall make the scoundrels pay dearly for it!" in sudden fierceness. "For the lives of my loved ones I shall have the lives of a hundred, yes, five hundred of the redcoated fiends! I have sworn it, and I have made a good beginning; and before many days have passed the British shall have cause to tremble when they hear George Grady, the Avenger, mentioned!"

He broke off suddenly, however, with a deprecating smile and gesture. "But it does no good to harrow your feelings with talk like that," he said; "nor is this a pleasant sight for you," motioning toward the dead bodies of the troopers. "You had better return to your home at once. Dick, will you accompany her?"

"Certainly," was the youth's reply; "but what will you do, George? Where will I find you again?"

"Here, or near this spot, Dick. I shall remain in this vicinity and keep a lookout for small parties of redcoats and strike them a blow whenever I get the opportunity."

"Very well; I will accompany Miss Mumford to her home and then rejoin you here."

"Thank you!" said Ethel, smiling upon Dick. She made no objection to his accompanying her, although it was only about two miles to her home and she could have gone there alone, very well. The truth was, she had taken a liking to the handsome young "Liberty Boy," and wished him to go with her. "I thank you both, most heartily and sincerely for what you have done for me; and now, good-by, Mr. Grady," giving him her hand. "I hope that we shall meet again."

"I trust that we may do so," replied George, and then Ethel and Dick rode away, leaving the Avenger to keep watch for more redcoats.

Onward the two rode, talking to each other with as much freedom as if they had been friends for years. Dick thought his companion most charming, and if he had known the truth, Ethel was trying to make him think just that very thing. There was really nothing of the coquette about the girl, however; she was a good, sweet, tender-hearted maiden, and had taken a sudden, strong liking to the handsome "Liberty Boy."



It did not take them long to reach Ethel's home, and just as they reached the gate in front of the house a man and woman were coming out of the front door. They were evidently greatly excited and were listening to the excited utterances and explanations of a couple of colored servants, a man and a woman.

"There are father and mother!" cried Ethel, "and they have just learned that I was kidnapped by the redcoats. I will call to them and put their fears to rest." Then she lifted up her voice and called out:

"Father! Mother! Here I am, safe and sound. There is nothing to worry about!"

The two whirled around, and, as their eyes fell upon the girl, cries of joy and relief escaped their lips.

"Ethel, my daughter!" exclaimed her mother.

"Thank God, you are safe!" cried her father.

Then both came running out to the road and reached there just as Ethel was lifted down by Dick, who had quickly leaped to the ground. The next instant the girl was in the arms of her mother, who hugged and kissed her, and shed happy tears over her. Then Ethel gave her father a good hug and some kisses, after which she introduced Dick and told about her rescue from the British by Dick and his friend, George Grady.

The father and mother of the girl shook Dick's hand heartily and thanked him, again and again, for what he had done, and, at the suggestion of Ethel, pressed him to remain to supper with them—as it was now growing well along toward the latter portion of the afternoon. Dick begged to be excused, however; he said he must return to his comrade, George Grady.

"I am afraid he may get into serious trouble," he said to Ethel; "he is not afraid of anything, you know, and if he gets sight of a party of redcoats I am afraid he will attack them, no matter how many there may be of them."

"And lose his life!" said Ethel. "That would be terrible!" and then she told her parents the story of the murder of the parents, sister and brother of George Grady, and of the oath which the young man had taken to be avenged.

"Poor, poor fellow!" said Mrs. Mumford, sadly; "what a terrible blow!"

"That was terrible, sure!" agreed Mr. Mumford. "I knew Mr. Grady—had a speaking acquaintance with him, but did not know any of the other members of his family. It is too bad, too bad!"

"Yes, indeed, it is a sad case," said Dick; "and now I will bid you good-by and return to my friend."

"But you will return again—soon, Mr. Slater?" asked

Ethel, with a look of entreaty. "I—that is, we wish chance to thank you for what you have done for us, don't we, father and mother?"

"Yes, indeed!" in unison. "Mr. Slater must promise to come and see us and spend some time at our home. We really cannot take 'no' for an answer!" the last from Mrs. Mumford.

"Thank you," said Dick; "if I can possibly make it in my way to come I shall do so. Good-by!" and leaping into the saddle he rode away. He had gone scarcely more than three-quarters of a mile when he was startled by an apparition which came forth from among the trees at the roadside and approached him. The apparition was that of a girl, seemingly about eighteen years of age—though it was impossible to make a close guess as to this on account of the fact that her face was almost covered with blood which had streamed down over it from a cut in the scalp. The blood was dry, now, however, but the face—what could be seen of it—was white as paper and the girl staggered from side to side as she advanced. She was evidently very weak—almost fainting, in fact.

"Oh, sir!—kind sir, save me!" the girl cried, in hysterical voice, holding out her hands toward Dick. "Save me, oh, save me from those fiends!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WOUNDED MAIDEN.

Dick's heart went out in sympathy for the poor girl who, it was plain to be seen, had suffered so terribly at no very distant time as to almost unseat her reason; and stopping his horse he leaped to the ground—just in time to catch the girl in his arms, her strength seemingly suddenly give out. She certainly would have fallen if he had not caught her, and although she was not unconscious she lay in his arms, trembling and as weak, almost as an infant. "You will save me from them, won't you, kind sir?" she asked, looking up into his eyes, beseechingly; and then she threw her arms around his neck and looking wildly around her, cried, in a low, tense voice while there was a look of terror in her eyes: "They are coming! Don't you hear them? Oh, let us flee at once or we will be murdered!"

She tried to free herself, panting like a startled fawn, but Dick held her gently but firmly, and spoke reassuringly to her.



"They are not coming," he said, soothingly; "you are safe now. I will take care of you and they shall not harm you."

"Oh, but I see them!" wildly. "They are all around us and they are murdering everybody! Ah, my poor mother! my poor father!—and Tom! They have killed you all—they have killed you, killed you!"

The girl struggled to free herself, a wild light of terror and sorrow in her eyes, but Dick held her firmly and spoke to her gently and soothingly. A sudden, wonderful suspicion took possession of his mind: Could it be possible that this poor girl was George Grady's sister? Dick hoped that such might be the case since she was not, seemingly, seriously wounded. The nervous shock had been worse than the real wound, though that had undoubtedly rendered her insensible for the time being. He had not learned from George when it was that his folks had been murdered, nor how he knew all had been killed.

"He may have gone to his home, found them lying, seemingly, all dead, and rode away without ascertaining that one might be alive," thought Dick; "and in that case it is possible that this is his sister—alive. Ah, I hope so, for it will be a wonderful thing for him and will do him a world of good."

Dick asked the girl her name, but she either did not understand him or could not remember, for she looked puzzled and then shook her head.

"Poor girl!" thought Dick; "her mind is temporarily deranged by the terrible scene which she saw and participated in. But what shall be done with her?"

Then a thought struck him and he exclaimed: "Just the thing! I will take her back to the home of Ethel Mumford. I know they will be glad to take her in and do what they can for her. Yes, that is the thing to do!"

Then he made his way to the side of Major, who was standing quietly where he had been left by his master, and began figuring on how to mount without being in danger of letting the girl get away and resume her wanderings—for when one of the frightened spells was upon her she seemed possessed of great strength.

"This is my horse," he said, gently; "and if you will mount him and go with me we can easily escape your enemies. Will you do it?"

"Yes, yes!" was the eager reply; "that will be nice! Quick, let us mount and away!"

"Stand here for a moment till I have mounted," said Dick, "and then I will lift you to a place in front of me."

He leaped into the saddle, and then leaning down lifted the girl with as much ease as though she were an infant,

and holding her in his arms he gave Major the word to turn around, which the intelligent animal at once did. Then at a word from his master the horse made his way back along the road, going at a walk.

Ten minutes later they arrived at the Mumford home, and Ethel, who was looking out of the window, saw them and came running out of the house and down to the gate.

"Oh, Mr. Slater!—Dick; is it really you?" she cried, in delight. "But who is that you have there, and where did you find her?" in a tone of amazement, and, if the truth must be known, a little tinge of jealousy.

"I don't know who she is, Miss Mumford," replied Dick; and then he lifted the girl to the ground and leaped down himself.

Then he quickly told the story of his meeting with the wounded girl, and the sympathies of Ethel were enlisted at once, and she threw her arm around the strange girl's waist and helped support her as they walked toward the house.

"The poor dear!" murmured Ethel. "How she has suffered! Just look at the terrible wound in her scalp!"

"It is painful but not serious, I think," said Dick, who had had a great deal of experience in judging wounds. "It is the shock to her nervous system that has caused the most damage."

"Do you think she will get over it, Mr. Slater?"

"I think so; when she has had good care and been where it is quiet for a while. I certainly hope so."

Ethel gave him a quick glance. "So do I!" she said, heartily; "do you really think she is the sister of George Grady, Dick?"

"I am inclined to think so, Miss Ethel. I hope so, for his sake."

"Yes, indeed!"

The wounded girl said nothing as they were walking to the house, but looked around her in a wondering manner. When they stepped upon the piazza, however, she spoke.

"Oh, I feel better and safer now!" she said, with a sigh; "I don't believe those awful redcoats and Indians will find me here, do you?"

"No, indeed; certainly they will not," replied Dick, reassuringly.

The girl was led into the house, and when Mrs. Mumford saw her and heard the strange story of how Dick had found her, she was all excitement. "Take her to your room, Ethel," she said; "we will take care of the poor dear. Oh, this is dreadful! Just to think what she has suffered



—and how such might have been your fate, too, Ethel, but for Mr. Slater and his brave comrade, Mr. Grady."

"True, mother," agreed Ethel. Then they conducted the strange girl to Ethel's room and water and bandages were brought. The wound was washed out and Dick made an examination, watched eagerly and anxiously by Mrs. Mumford and Ethel.

"It is not a serious wound," Dick announced, presently; "I will bind it up and I think it will be well in a week or so. The nervous shock is where the trouble comes in; but I rather think that with quiet and good care she will be all right again, sooner or later, and quite herself again."

"Oh, I hope so!" exclaimed Ethel; "she is such a sweet-looking girl!"

And, indeed, Ethel was right. Now that the blood was washed off her face it could be seen that she was a very pretty girl, indeed. Dick looked closely and thought he could detect some resemblance to George Grady.

They tried to find out the girl's name, but she could not tell them. The poor girl tried to think, but after a vain attempt would have to give it up and shake her head, so they ceased troubling her.

"I think she will remember it sooner or later," said Mrs. Mumford. "Poor, poor girl!"

"I think so," agreed Dick; "and now I must be going. With your permission I will bring my friend, George Grady, here at the earliest possible moment to see this girl, for I more than half suspect she is his sister."

"Yes, yes; bring him along!" said the woman.

"Oh, won't it be splendid if she is his sister!" cried Ethel.

"It will, indeed!" coincided Dick; and then he bade them good-by, and, going out to the road, mounted and rode away.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LIZZIE WARNS GEORGE.

Lizzie Sloan was well pleased when, on glancing back over her shoulder she saw that Captain Ravencraft was riding back in the other direction.

"Goody!" she exclaimed to herself; "I have distanced and discouraged him and he is going back. Now I can go and find George and warn him of his danger."

Lizzie allowed her horse to slacken his speed to an ordinary gallop, as she did not wish to wind him when there

was no need of it. Onward they went, and had gone several miles when suddenly a man stepped out from among the trees at one side of the road and called her by name. A glad cry escaped her and she reined up her horse instantly and leaped to the ground.

"Oh, George! is it really you?" Lizzie cried, as she leaped into the outstretched arms of George Grady—for it was indeed he. "I am so glad to see you, George, but I am so—so sorry—to know that—that——"

"I know what you would say, darling!" said George, as he bent over and kissed the trembling lips and gazed down into the beautiful eyes; "I know you are sorry to know that my beloved father, mother, sister and brother have been murdered by the redcoated fiends; and I will tell you something, little sweetheart: But for the remembrance of you and your love for me, I know that I should have gone mad. Just to think of it, sweetheart—just think of me going home to find my parents, my sister and my brother lying on the ground, dead—murdered—and the house in ashes! Oh, it was a terrible blow, and for a few moments my brain reeled and I thought I should go mad! Then your sweet face appeared before me and drove the madness away. I said to myself that I would not give way, but that I would live to avenge their fate and then devote my life and love to you. Oh, I am so glad to be able to fold you to my heart, little girl! It does me a world of good!"

The girl's form trembled and tears—half of sorrow, half of joy—dropped from her eyes. "Oh, George—my love!" was all she said, but the tone told volumes and the young man held her to him firmly and kissed her, again and again. The presence of the only living person—so far as he knew—that he had left to love, made him for the time being forget his great sorrow, and it was good for him. Lizzie had done well in coming to him at that time, for his overwrought brain needed the rest and relaxation—needed it sorely.

But the girl was a sensible, practical little body, and she did not lose sight of the fact that her lover was in danger and that she had come to warn him. She presently told him that General Prevost was sending out a number of parties of soldiers to search for him, with instructions to put him to death if they got the opportunity.

"Let them come!" exclaimed George, his voice ringing out defiantly; "let the scoundrels, the fiends come, and I will end the days of some more of them and avenge the murder of my loved ones! Let them come!"

"Oh, George, they will be in such large parties that you will not dare show fight!" exclaimed Lizzie, a sudden,



terrible fear in her tones. "You must not try to fight them—promise me that you will not!"

"How many men will be in each party, Lizzie—did you learn that?" the young man asked.

"Fifty; so I heard."

"That is quite a number for one man to contend with," in a musing tone; "but——"

"Oh, George, it would be suicide!" in affrighted tones. "You must not think of such a thing as offering to fight them. You must promise me that you will do your best to avoid them, won't you?"

It was impossible to withstand such pleading, and George made the girl happy by saying that he would not attack a party of such size, voluntarily. "If I can get one of the parties split up into three or four, however, I shall make it warm for them!" he said, grimly, his eyes flashing.

"You must be careful, George," said the girl; and then she went on: "Why not let the matter rest as it now stands? You have, so I have been informed, killed a score of redcoats since the—the terrible happening; why not let it go, now, and rest satisfied?"

"What! rest satisfied when only a score of the fiends have been killed?" the young man cried. "Oh, no! I could not think of doing that, Lizzie—not even for your sake, much as I love you. The blood of my murdered loved ones is calling aloud for vengeance, and not a single one fewer than one hundred lives shall pay the forfeit for theirs! I have sworn it, Lizzie, and I shall keep my oath."

A sad look came over the girl's face. She saw that it would do no good to try to persuade her lover out of his notion, and she set herself to work to do the next best thing—extract a promise from him that he would be as careful as possible and not do anything rash or reckless.

They talked for a long time—just how long they had no idea, for they took no account of time—and then Lizzie suddenly exclaimed: "Yonder comes some one!"

George looked up the road. A single horseman was approaching, and after a glance the young man said: "That is my friend, Dick Slater, the noted patriot, scout and spy." And then he told how they had rescued Ethel Mumford from the redcoats and how Dick had escorted the young lady home.

"Oh, is it indeed the famous patriot spy of whom we have heard so much?" exclaimed Lizzie. "The young man who is the captain of a company of youths known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76'?"

"It is indeed he, Lizzie; and he is as brave as a lion and more terrible than one when in battle. But for his

assistance I think I would not have been so successful in routing the redcoats."

"Oh, I hope he will remain with you, George!"

It was indeed Dick Slater, who was returning from the home of the Mumfords. He caught sight of George and the girl while yet quite a ways off, and rode forward at a gallop.

George introduced his sweetheart to Dick as soon as the latter had reached them, and the youth was shrewd enough to understand matters at a glance. The blushing face of the girl was as good as a signboard, while even George blushed somewhat.

"A sweetheart, eh?" thought Dick. "I am glad of that; for it will give him something to live for—and now, if it should be that the unfortunate girl whom I found on the road and took to the home of the Mumfords is his sister, then he will likely be all right."

While thinking thus, Dick was acknowledging the introduction and sizing up the girl. "She is a good, sweet girl, or I'm no judge," he said to himself; "she will make George a good wife."

"Oh, Mr. Slater, I am so glad to know you!" exclaimed Lizzie, giving him her hand. "I have heard many wonderful stories regarding you and your band of 'Liberty Boys,' and have often wished that I might see and know you."

"The pleasure is mine," said Dick, pleasantly. "I am glad to know one who is a friend of the great cause."

After some further conversation George explained the errand which had brought Lizzie there. "She was my darling sister's dearest friend," he said; "and so, when she learned that a number of parties were to be sent out in search of me, she decided to take the risk of coming and warning me."

"That is all right, George," said Dick, with a smile and a glance at the blushing face of the girl; "I guess she is a very dear friend of yours, too—but never mind," as the other flushed up, "I am glad that you have information of the coming of the redcoats, too, as otherwise you might have run into one of the parties and lost your life."

"And you will make him be careful now, won't you, Mr. Slater?" asked Lizzie. There was a beseeching tone to her voice which Dick understood, and he hastened to assure the girl that he would do his best to make George be careful and not let him take any unnecessary risks.

Then Dick, in as calm and careful a manner as possible, told George of having found a wounded girl on the road leading toward the Mumford home, and how he had taken the girl there and left her; and then he asked the other



what sort of looking girl his sister was. The young man had listened to the youth's story with great and increasing excitement, and he now cried out that he believed the girl was his sister. Lizzie, too, was greatly excited, and she quickly gave a vivid word description of Alice Grady, George's sister.

"It is possible—mind you, I say 'possible'—that the girl is George's sister," said Dick, cautiously; "your description, Miss Sloan, agrees with the looks of this girl."

"Oh, I am almost sure it is my sister!" cried George, his eyes shining with excitement. "I did not stop to investigate when I reached home and found them—lying there—on the ground, silent and motionless; but supposing they were dead I turned and rode away at full speed, mad with pain and anger, and anxious, thinking only of meeting some of the fiends who had done the awful deed. So you see it is possible that Alice was not dead but only unconscious."

"Yes, it is possible," agreed Dick; "and I hope that it is the case."

"Oh, I hope it is Alice!" breathed Lizzie. "Won't it be grand if it is indeed she! Oh, George, let me go to the home of those kind people and see whether or not it is she!"

George glanced up, noted that it was getting along toward evening, and hesitated. "I am afraid it will make you till after dark getting back to Savannah," he said.

"That doesn't matter," the girl hastened to say; "I know the way and have been out till after nightfall many times. My folks won't begin to feel uneasy about me until ten or eleven o'clock. Let me go with you, George!"

The young man could not withstand the pleading of his sweetheart, and he said: "Very well, you may go along with us, but you must let me accompany you back close to Savannah."

It was the girl's turn to hesitate. "I am afraid we might encounter a party of the redcoats who are in search of you," she said.

"Oh, we can keep a sharp lookout for them, and I will have time enough to slip into the timber out of sight before they could get close enough to know there was any one with you."

"Very well, George. Come; let us be going at once."

The three mounted and set out. When they reached the road which led toward the home of the Mumfords they turned up it and continued onward at a gallop. Ten minutes later they were at the farmhouse, and, alighting, hastened to the house.

They were met at the door by Ethel Mumford, whose

face lighted up as she saw that Dick had returned. He hastened to introduce his companions and then said: "Mr. Grady thinks it quite possible that the young lady whom I brought here a short time ago is his sister; may we go and see her? How has she been—quiet?"

"Oh, yes, yes, indeed! Oh, I hope she is his sister!" murmured Ethel. "Just come right along and I will show you to the room. She is where she was when you were away, Mr. Slater."

In the hall they met Mrs. Mumford, and paused long enough to greet her and explain their presence, when they continued on and were soon in the room. The instant the eyes of George Grady and Lizzie Sloan fell upon the face of the girl, they gave utterance to a cry of joy, in unison, and sprang to her side.

"It is Alice!" was their exclamation, and the next moment Lizzie was kissing the girl and crying for joy, while George was rubbing her forehead and hair in a caressing manner.

"Oh, it seems too good to be true!" murmured Lizzie, and then a sad look appeared on her face as she saw the vacant look in the girl's eyes.

"Do you suppose she will ever regain her right mind?" Lizzie asked Dick in an aside.

"I think so," the youth replied; "her system has received a severe nervous shock, and when she recovers from that I think she will be entirely rational."

"Oh, I hope so—I pray so! Poor, dear Alice! How she has suffered!"

George did not say much, but it was evident that the knowledge that his sister was alive was very pleasing to him; yet at the same time there was a sober look on his face, a grim, thoughtful look which boded ill for the redcoats who had murdered his parents and brother and given his sister such a shock as to unhinge her mind.

He asked if his sister might be allowed to remain there for a while, and Mrs. Mumford hastened to assure him that the girl was welcome to make their house her home for as long a time as she cared to remain.

"Very well," said George; "you are very kind, indeed, and I thank you. I may leave her here for some time as I know of no place to take her. Of course, I shall pay you for taking care of her."

"Indeed you will not!" declared the good-hearted woman; "you and Mr. Slater saved my daughter from being carried away by the redcoats and we shall be only too glad to, in a measure, repay you by doing what we can for your sister."

"Oh, if she could only be brought to our house, George



exclaimed Lizzie. "I insist that you allow her to be brought there at the earliest possible moment."

"Thank you, Lizzie," said George; "I will allow her to be taken to your home as soon as she becomes rational."

"Don't be in a hurry to take her away," said Mrs. Mumford; "she is more than welcome to remain here as long as she likes."

"Yes, indeed," said Ethel.

After some further talk, George and Lizzie took their departure, Dick having allowed himself to be persuaded to remain at the Mumford home and take supper there. Mrs. Mumford had tried to get George and Lizzie to remain to supper, but they declined, as it would be late, anyway, by the time Lizzie got back to Savannah.

Although they had claimed to be in considerable of a hurry, they rode slowly, and it was dark by the time they reached the main road. As they turned into the road and headed toward Savannah a shiver went over Lizzie's form and she said, in a voice which trembled: "Oh, I am so afraid we will meet some of those redcoats, George!"

"Oh, I hardly think we will, Lizzie," said George, reassuringly; "we will ride slowly and keep a sharp lookout for the enemy."

They did not urge their horses out of a walk, and as they went along they talked of Alice Grady's miraculous escape from death, and of their love and their plans for the future.

Every few minutes they paused and listened intently to see if they could hear anything of an approaching enemy, and George usually embraced the opportunity to steal a kiss from the not-unwilling lips of his sweetheart. We won't be mean enough to insinuate that George stopped oftener than was necessary, but—well, the reader knows that the young avenger did not stand in any very great fear of the redcoats, and we will say that we shrewdly suspect that he would not have stopped quite so frequently had he been alone.

They had gone perhaps two miles when, during one of their pauses, they heard the sound of hoofbeats.

"They are coming!" exclaimed Lizzie, in a low, frightened undertone. "What shall we do?"

"Come," replied George; "we will ride in among the trees at the roadside and the redcoats—if redcoats they are—will not be able to see us and will pass by without having the least suspicion of our presence."

The two quickly rode in among the trees and coming to a stop, awaited, in silence, the approach of those whom they suspected to be enemies.

Soon the horsemen were opposite where the two were

concealed, and George estimated that there must be at least forty or fifty in the party. The members were laughing and talking, and their words, which could be heard and understood, apprised the listeners of the fact that this was one of the parties which had been sent out by General Prevost to search for George Grady, the Avenger.

The troopers were telling what they would do when they found the man for whom they were searching, and it was all George could do to keep from charging out upon them and giving them a taste of his quality. The chances are that he would have done so had it not been for the presence of his sweetheart, whose safety he would not jeopardize.

"Wait," he said to himself, "you will get a chance at me before many hours have passed, you cowardly murderers! And then we will see whether or not you will do those things which you are boasting that you will do!"

The redcoats rode onward, in blissful unconsciousness of their proximity to the man for whom they were searching, and when they were at a safe distance, George and Lizzie emerged from among the trees and rode onward down the road in the direction of Savannah.

Twenty minutes later they were within half a mile of the outskirts of the city, and Lizzie drew rein, with the remark: "George, you must not go any farther; we are within a third of a mile of the picket line, and if you should be discovered and the alarm given, you would be pursued and perhaps captured or killed. You must not go any farther. I am practically at home now and you need have no fears whatever on my account."

"Very well, darling; I will stop here, as you wish it," said George, and then he reached over, placed his arm around her waist, and, pulling her toward him, kissed her, again and again.

"Good-by, sweetheart!" he whispered, in a voice which vibrated with feeling.

"Good-by, George—darling!" murmured Lizzie; "and now promise me, dear, that you will be very, very careful. Remember, Alice is alive and that you have her and me to live for. Please, please promise me that you will not do anything rash!"

"I will be careful, Lizzie, for your sake and for the sake of poor, dear sister Alice."

"I am glad, George. Oh, you have made me so happy! If they were to succeed in killing you I should die—I know it, I feel it!"

A few more words, a few more kisses and then they parted, Lizzie going onward toward Savannah, while George rode back up the road in the direction from which they had just come.



The moon was coming up and soon George was able to see the road with considerable distinctness. He galloped onward at a lively rate for more than half an hour, and then of a sudden the rattle of musketry was heard, coming from somewhere ahead of him.

The young avenger became excited at once.

"A fight is on!" he exclaimed. "And a fight in these days can only be between the king's minions and the freedom-loving patriots. The latter are my friends, and those, yonder, may be needing the assistance of my good right arm. I must hasten and get into the fight!"

Then he urged his horse onward at renewed speed and presently came in sight of the contending forces. They were in the road, straight ahead, and as he could see the redcoats very plainly, he knew that the British troopers were on the side next to him.

Drawing both swords and waving them in the air, George Grady, the Avenger, dashed forward, straight toward the redcoats, yelling at the top of his voice as he did so:

"Down with the minions of a tyrant king! Kill the murderers of women and children!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### "THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76" APPEAR.

The next instant the avenger was in among the redcoats, striking about him with all his might. In each hand was a sword, and to say that he committed great havoc is stating the case very mildly indeed. The redcoats were so demoralized by this attack from the rear, while having at the same time more in front to look after than they could handle, that they gave utterance to yells of fear and took refuge in flight.

They darted past George and urged their horses back down the road in the direction of Savannah. The young man laid about him with terribly fury, keeping up his wild cries until the majority of the redcoats had fled, and then he struck out in pursuit, still wielding those terrible swords whenever he got within striking distance of one of the troopers.

A number of those who had been contending with the redcoats before George put in an appearance, accompanied the avenger in his pursuit of the enemy, but presently they stopped and called to him of the two swords to stop also.

"Let them go, friend," called out one of the strangers; "we have given them a good thrashing; now let them go back to their friends and tell about it."

George stopped rather reluctantly and rode back to where the strangers were. Said one: "You did some of the best work I have seen done in many a day, my friend. I would be pleased to know one who can handle two swords at once and slash off redcoat heads with such ease and despatch as you showed."

"My name is George Grady, sir," replied the young man; "and if you had the same incentive to slash off the heads of redcoats that I have you would no doubt be able to do it as neatly as I do it. Only this morning I rode home, after being away for a few days, to find my parents, my sister—as I thought—and brother lying in the yard, dead—murdered by the redcoat fiends, and the house burned to the ground. My sister, however, thank God! was not dead, but still lives. The others, though, are dead; and I have sworn to have the lives of five hundred redcoats to pay for the lives of my loved ones!"

There was something so fierce in the tone of the young man that his hearers almost shuddered. "I do not blame you for feeling as you do, or for fighting as fiercely as you do," said the one who had spoken to him in the first place. George Grady, I am glad to know you, and here is my hand. My name is Bob Estabrook, and while I cannot introduce you, one by one, to my comrades, I will say that they are known, collectively, as 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' and——"

"'The Liberty Boys of '76!'" cried George.

"Yes, and——"

"Glorious!" again interrupted George. "Why, I am well acquainted with your commander, Dick Slater, and he is——"

"Do you know where he is?" broke in Bob—for it was indeed he and the "Liberty Boys." "Have you seen him recently? He came on down from Charleston a day ahead of us and we were wondering how we should be able to find him. Where is he?"

"Within two miles of this spot," was the reply; "I was with him less than two hours ago, and he is waiting for me to come back to where he is. I can guide you right to him."

"Good! That is all right!"

Then Bob explained that they had been riding along the road, going in the direction of Savannah, and how, suddenly, on rounding a bend in the road they had come face to face with a party of redcoats. "We were so close there was no chance to avoid them," he went on, "and, indeed,



we had no desire to do so, so we went for them with all our might, and were handling them pretty roughly when you put in an appearance and added to their discomfiture. I think that they imagined you were an entire regiment, for they broke and fled at once, as you know. Jove! we should be glad to have you become a member of the company, Mr. Grady!"

"If you remain in this neighborhood I shall be only too glad to co-operate with you and do all I can to assist you," said George; "my knowledge of the country may help you quite a good deal."

"Yes, indeed; and the peculiar and effective manner in which you wield two swords at once will help us wonderfully, too!"

Then they returned to the scene of the encounter and looked about them to see if any of their missing comrades were dead. It was found that four of the "Liberty Boys" were wounded, but none had been killed. On the other hand, a number of the redcoats were dead. One, who had been knocked unconscious by a fall from his horse, was told that he might go free in order that he might go and get aid for his wounded comrades. The "Liberty Boys" were very good-hearted, and would otherwise have tried to render the wounded such aid as was possible.

Two of the "Liberty Boys" were so badly wounded that they could not ride, and Bob asked George Grady if he knew of any place near at hand where they could be taken, temporarily, until they could be moved by conveyance. The young man said that there was an old cabin in the timber, not a quarter of a mile distant, and it was decided to take the wounded youths there.

This was done, and then, after binding up the wounds as well as they could, the youths consulted regarding their next movement. It was decided, presently, that the "Liberty Boys" should remain at the cabin, while George and Bob should ride to the Mumford home and see Dick and map out their plans.

As soon as this had been decided upon the two mounted their horses and rode away. It was only about a twenty-minutes' ride to the home of the Mumfords, and when Dick saw Bob he was delighted.

"Hello, Bob!" he greeted. "So you have got here, eh? Well, I'm glad of that. I wasn't looking for you before to-morrow."

"Oh, we are the boys who have 'push,' Dick, my boy!" laughed Bob. "Indeed, we have so much 'push' that we have already had one pitched battle with the redcoats."

"You don't mean it! Tell me about it."

Bob did so. Dick was delighted and was glad to learn

that, although four of the boys were wounded, none had been killed.

"You thrashed the redcoats, anyway!" he said, "and that is the main thing. I suppose those who escaped will return to Savannah and tell a wonderful story of how they were attacked by a regiment of patriots, at least."

"Yes, they will certainly say that," laughed Bob; "indeed, I judge they will make it two regiments, for Mr. Grady, here, attacked them from the rear while we were at them from the front, and from the manner in which he gave it to them they will think that he was a whole regiment!"

"I suppose that was one of the parties that was sent out in search of you, George," remarked Dick.

"I judge so, Dick," was the reply.

"Well, they found you, but in a way they did not fancy; and now, my friend, as my 'Liberty Boys' are on hand, I shall be able to render you some assistance; and while those parties are searching for you we will be searching for them, and I think we shall be able to keep them busy."

"Thank you," said George, gratefully; "I shall be very glad to have your assistance, and, as you say, we will keep the redcoats busy."

Dick had come out on the piazza to meet the two, whom he had seen riding up, the moon shining brightly, and now he conducted them into the house and introduced Bob to Mr. and Mrs. Mumford and Ethel. Then he said they must be going, but while George was upstairs where he went to see his sister, Mr. Mumford suggested that the wounded "Liberty Boys" be brought to his house.

"We shall be glad to have you bring them here, Mr. Slater," he said; "and we will take the best of care of them. Here they will have good nursing and will have a chance to get well, while if you should let them remain in the old cabin they might die on account of exposure and lack of care."

"Thank you," said Dick, gratefully; "that is the very thing, and I accept your offer in the same spirit in which you make it. We will bring the boys here at once. Have you a conveyance that we can use for the purpose, Mr. Mumford?"

"Oh, yes; I have a light wagon in which we can place some straw, and the wounded men will ride easily and comfortably."

"That will do splendidly; Bob and I will go with you and help hitch up."

They went to the stable, and fifteen minutes later appeared in front of the house seated in a good-sized but light



wagon. George got in with them, and, leaving their horses hitched in front of the house, they drove away.

They were gone about an hour and when they returned they brought the four wounded "Liberty Boys," who were at once taken into the house and to a large room in which four cots had been placed, and here they were made comfortable. "They shall have the best of care and nursing," said Mr. Mumford; "and I think that they will all get well, as they seem strong and bright."

"It is their way to be bright and cheerful," said Dick, in a tone of pride; "I have seen some of my brave boys die with a smile on their face, Mr. Mumford. They are full of 'push' and vim and energy, and are always good-natured, bright and cheerful, no matter what they have to contend with. I am like you, however; I believe they will get well, to a man, for they seem to be bearing up wonderfully well."

Then Dick and Bob bade their wounded comrades good-by and spoke words of cheer, after which they went downstairs, and, bidding Mr. and Mrs. Mumford and Ethel good-by, they mounted their horses and rode away. They were soon at the cabin and it did not take long to decide upon their course of action.

"We will go out where we can keep watch on the highway," said Dick, "and whenever we get sight of one of the parties that are out searching for Mr. Grady, we will go for it, rough shod."

This met with the approval of all and they made their way to the road, and, taking up their position in the timber, waited patiently for the appearance of the enemy.

They had been there about half an hour when a party of redcoats was seen approaching. It was coming from the northward and was doubtless on its way back to Savannah, after an unsuccessful search for the avenger.

Dick sent the word along the line to "Get ready!" The "Liberty Boys" did so, cocking their muskets without making any noise and then they waited eagerly for the word to fire.

They did not have long to wait. When about half the party had passed, Dick gave the order to "Fire!" and the volley rang out. Terrible execution was done, more than a dozen of the redcoats going down, and then as the "Liberty Boys" burst from the timber and charged upon the troopers, they put the spurs to their horses and dashed away as if the Old Nick was after them. The shock of the surprise had demoralized them, and they did not have the courage to stand their ground and show fight. The youths pursued the enemy for half a mile or so and then rode back to where the encounter—if such it may be called

—took place. It was found that nine redcoats were dead and three were wounded. As luck would have it, the three were not so seriously wounded as to make it impossible for them to ride, and they were assisted to mount and sent after their fleeing comrades, with instructions to tell them to come back and bury their dead.

"Tell them that eight or ten may return and attend to that work and we will not molest them," said Dick; and the wounded men said they would take the message.

The "Liberty Boys" then rode up the road toward the north, and an hour later met and struck another party of redcoats a severe blow. This was the last party they encountered, however, and about midnight they went to the cabin in the woods and went into camp. They were very well satisfied, and considered that they had done a very good night's work. Even George Grady seemed to be in a somewhat cheerful mood.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GEORGE GRADY VISITS HIS SWEETHEART.

When the leaders of the parties that had gone out in search of George Grady, and had been struck severe blows by the "Liberty Boys," reported to General Prevost next morning, he was wild with anger. He was surprised as well, for he had had no intimation of the presence of any antagonistic force in the vicinity of Savannah. He had thought that they had everything their own way, and he hardly knew what to think when told that quite a large force had attacked at least three of the parties he had sent out and put them to flight, after killing and wounding a number of the troopers.

As we have said, he was very angry, and began making preparations to get even with the insolent "rebels." He decided to send out several more parties, but to make them large enough to handle the enemy in case it was encountered. Having so decided, he lost no time, and soon the men were getting ready.

The news that the parties that had been sent out in search of George Grady, the Avenger, had met with disaster traveled rapidly, and was soon known throughout Savannah. The Sloans heard it and were delighted. "Oh, I am so glad!" exclaimed Lizzie. "Do you know, I think I know who the patriots are that did such good work against the redcoats last night."

"Who?" asked her father.



"I think they are the young men known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' You know, their captain, Dick Slater, is in the vicinity, and although he did not say so, it is reasonable to suppose that his men were not far distant."

"I judge that you are right, Lizzie."

"I am sure that I am, and oh, I am so glad! For now George will have somebody to help him in his fight against the redcoats."

"Yes, indeed; otherwise, I am afraid he would very soon have lost his life."

"I feared he would be rash, father, though he promised me that he would be careful. Oh, I wish the terrible war would end!"

"So do we all!"

General Prevost sent out the parties, and for several days there were lively marchings and counter-marchings in the vicinity of Savannah, and there were several encounters between the redcoats and the "Liberty Boys," in which the king's forces got the worst of it each time—for Dick Slater was careful not to let his boys expose themselves very much, if it could be helped.

At the end of four days Lizzie told her parents that on the morrow she was going to go to the home of the Mumfords to see Alice Grady; of course, she hoped to see George, her lover, as well as his sister.

Next morning she mounted Selim and set out, but when she reached the picket line just outside the limits of the city she met with a bitter disappointment; the sentinel refused to let her pass. She asked why this was done, and the man told her he did not know; that it was orders that no one should be allowed to pass out unless accompanied by soldiers of the king.

Lizzie was terribly disappointed, and returned to her home and reported her non-success in getting out of the city. "I am more than half a mind to try to slip out!" said the girl, spiritedly.

Her parents tried to dissuade her from this course, but had hard work in doing it. She came to the conclusion, finally, that it would be best; for if she were to try to slip out and was captured, it might go hard with her as she would be suspected of being a spy. "It is hard, though, to give up the idea of seeing George!" she said to herself.

That evening, a short time after dark, there came a knock on the door, and when it was opened by Mr. Sloan a man wearing a heavy, black beard stepped into the house and pushed the door to. Mr. Sloan was about to speak angrily and demand to know what the stranger meant by such insolence, when the newcomer pulled the beard off and revealed the handsome, manly face of George Grady. A

little scream of delight escaped the lips of Lizzie, and she leaped into the arms of her lover.

"Oh, George! Is it indeed you?" she cried. "Oh, I am so glad—and yet, I fear much, for you have taken your life in your hands in venturing thus into the lion's den. Why have you done it?"

"To get to see you, little sweetheart," said George, giving her a kiss; "I could not wait any longer. It seems like a year since I have seen you."

"It seems longer than that to me, George—but much as I wished to see you I would rather you had not come; for I am afraid your presence in the city may be discovered, and if you were to be captured your death would be certain to follow."

"But my presence will not be discovered, Lizzie, I am sure of it; for I slipped into the city without attracting any attention, and my disguise was so good that no one would have known me had they met me face to face and been ever so well acquainted with me."

George now greeted Mr. and Mrs. Sloan, and they were glad to see the young man and did all they could to make it pleasant for him. They went out of the room and left the lovers together, and for an hour or more the two were very happy. Lizzie asked after George's sister Alice, and he said that the poor girl was slowly but surely improving, and that he was sure that before very long she would again have the full possession of her mental faculties.

"Oh, I am so glad to hear that, George!" breathed Lizzie. "I hope and pray that she may soon be herself again. How I wish that she could be here with me. I would take such good care of her."

"I know you would, Lizzie; but she is having good care where she is, and I think it is as well that she isn't here in the city. The British might learn who she was and do something mean because she is my sister."

George did not dare remain too long for fear his presence in the city might become known, and at last he gave Lizzie a farewell kiss, and, donning his disguise, took his departure. He had just reached the street when Lizzie, who was watching her lover, came near shrieking aloud, for suddenly a dozen men leaped forward from a hiding place and threw themselves upon George Grady!

## CHAPTER X.

### GEORGE GRADY IS CAPTURED.

The young patriot, although taken by surprise, fought desperately to free himself and make his escape. He was



outnumbered so greatly, however, that he could not succeed, and was soon overpowered and made a prisoner.

His captors were jubilant, and marched the young man off up the street toward General Prevost's headquarters. The men were some of the soldiers of Captain Ravencraft's company, and the captain himself was with them. He it was who had seen the young man enter the Sloan home. He had been lurking in the vicinity, trying to get up courage to call and press his suit with Lizzie, and had seen the stranger enter. Something in his actions made the captain suspicious, and he had made up his mind to capture the man when he came forth. If the truth must be told the worthy captain suspected that the man might be a lover of Lizzie, and he was jealous. He did not as yet know who it was that he had captured, as the black beard which George wore had not become disarranged in the struggle.

They soon reached headquarters and were ushered into General Prevost's office. "Well, whom have you there, Captain Ravencraft?" asked the general, as he looked at the prisoner searchingly.

"I don't know who he is, general," replied the captain; "but I am confident that he is a patriot, and quite likely he is a spy. His actions were suspicious, and so I decided to capture him and bring him before you." For reasons of his own the captain did not choose to tell that the prisoner had been seen coming out of the Sloan house; and, indeed, he had cautioned his men to say nothing about this.

"Humph! don't know him, eh?" remarked the general. "Well, just yank that false beard off his face. Perhaps you may know him if you get a look at his features."

One of the men jerked the beard away, revealing the handsome, defiant features of the young man. As his eyes fell upon the face of the prisoner, a wild cry—of surprise and joy commingled, escaped the lips of Captain Ravencraft.

"It is George Grady, the Avenger!" he almost shouted.

"What!" roared General Prevost, leaping to his feet and staring at the prisoner as if he had suddenly turned into a wild beast of ferocious aspect. "You don't mean to say that this is—that you have captured that fellow?"

"It is he!" reiterated the captain, who had only too good reason for remembering the face of the young man. "I would know him anywhere. It is George Grady!"

"Good!" exclaimed the general, rubbing his hands; "you have indeed done a good stroke of work in capturing him, Captain Ravencraft."

The captain evidently thought so himself, for there was a look of delight, of fiendish joy on his face as he glared

at the man who had defeated him in the duel, and from whom he had been forced to flee in order to save his life.

General Prevost turned to the prisoner and glared at him in a manner which he intended should awe him; but he was doomed to be disappointed, for George Grady was not one to be awed by mere looks, no matter how fierce they might be. He met the British officer's gaze unflinchingly, and there was a sneering smile on his face.

"Well, sir," said General Prevost, in a triumphant, bullying tone, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing whatever, sir," was the calm reply.

"You do not deny that you are George Grady, the fellow who has styled himself the Avenger?"

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"Oh, there is not the least doubt of it, General Prevost," declared Captain Ravencraft; "I know him—would know him anywhere."

"I should think that you would remember me," said Grady, coolly; "if you had been a man, however, instead of a cowardly poltroon, you would not now be here, but would be rotting underground."

Captain Ravencraft's face flushed with anger.

"That is neither here nor there," he said, sullenly; "one thing is certain, you have done the last of that kind of work that you will ever do."

"The captain speaks truly," said General Prevost, sternly; "you have, so I understand, been the death of a number of my brave men——"

"You are mistaken," broke in George Grady; "I have yet to kill a single brave man wearing a scarlet coat. I have, however, killed at least fifty fiends in the shape of men, and I do not yet despair of adding at least as many more to the list."

"You cold-blooded scoundrel, you will never kill another British soldier!" cried Prevost, angrily and arrogantly. "And as for their not being brave men, I brand your statement as false! No braver men live than the soldiers of King George."

"No more miserable, cowardly poltroons live than the fiends who wear British uniforms!" was George Grady's defiant reply. "Do you call men brave who murder innocent women and children?"

There was something so terrible in the look which George Grady bent upon General Prevost as to cause that officer to quail in spite of himself. He tried to hide this with bluster, however.

"You are the most insolent rebel I ever saw!" the general cried. "But never mind, in a day or two you shall



swing from the limb of a tree and then we will see who is brave. I'll warrant that you'll beg like a hound."

"What! I beg of you?" cried George Grady, in bitter scorn. "Never! If die I must, I'll die like a man and a brave man. One thing I will say to you and that is that you had better make sure of me while you have me, for if I should be so fortunate as to succeed in escaping, woe to the redcoated minions of your tyrant king!"

"Away with him!" roared General Prevost. "Put him in the strongest cell in the prison and see to it that he does not escape. Should he succeed in doing so, off come the heads of the men who are to blame!"

The soldiers hustled George Grady away to the prison and placed him in one of the strongest cells, where he was left to ponder the situation. "Well," he said to himself, "this is not pleasant. I am afraid my days are numbered. Ah! if Dick Slater and his brave boys knew I had been captured they would make a desperate effort to rescue me. But they do not know it, and will have no suspicion of it until after it is too late to do me any good."

But here George was mistaken. The "Liberty Boys" were to learn of his capture that very night. They did so in this manner:

Lizzie Sloan, as we have shown, saw the capture of her lover, and was almost heart-broken, for she realized that unless he succeeded in escaping his life would pay the forfeit. But could he escape? She doubted it; but presently she thought of Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys." If anybody could rescue her lover they could. But how to let them know? There was only one way it could be done and that was by carrying the news to them herself.

No sooner thought of than put into execution. She told her parents what she was going to do, and although they did not think she would be able to slip through the British lines, they consented to let her make the attempt. Her father hastened to bridle and saddle Selim, and when the girl had mounted and was ready to go her parents kissed her and cautioned her, again and again to be very careful. Promising them that she would be very, very careful, the brave girl rode away.

She rode down an alley at the rear of the house, for she had been afraid to start from the front, fearing that there might be redcoats on watch. Lizzie was well versed in the streets of Savannah, and she was sure she knew of a way of getting out of the city that was unknown to the redcoats. This was by way of a little narrow street which crooked and wound around, and which, she believed, was not watched at all. She would try it, at any rate, and hope for the best.

She did so, and to her joy succeeded in getting safely out of the city and away. By making a circuit she struck into the main road leading northward, and once there she urged Selim to a swift gallop.

Onward she rode, but was forced once to take refuge in the timber at the roadside to let a party of redcoats pass. Then she was out and away again, and in an hour's time reached the side road which led up to the Mumford farmhouse.

Lizzie paused here and listened for a few minutes in the hope that she might hear something of the "Liberty Boys," but failing, she decided to go at once to the cabin in the woods, the location of which had been given her by her lover.

It did not take her long to reach the cabin, and to her great joy she found the "Liberty Boys" there. When Dick Slater saw who his visitor was he was greatly surprised, for he had known that George Grady had gone to Savannah to see her and he at once suspected that something had happened.

"What is it, Miss Sloan?" he asked when he had assisted her to alight. "Why are you here alone at this time of the night? Where is George?"

"He is a prisoner, Mr. Slater!" exclaimed Lizzie, in trembling tones. "And that is why I am here. I wish to ask you to try to rescue him. Will you do it?"

"We most assuredly will make the attempt, Miss Sloan!" Dick hastened to assure her. "George is one of my best and most valued friends, and we will rescue him or we will know the reason why—eh, boys?" to the "Liberty Boys" who were now crowded around, listening.

"Yes, yes!"

"We certainly will!"

"We'll do the best we can!"

"We'll have him out of the redcoats' hands, don't worry!"

"We have the necessary 'push,' if I do say it myself; and we will rescue him if such a thing is possible!"

Such were a few of the exclamations from the "Liberty Boys," and as she heard them Lizzie's face brightened.

"Oh, I hope you will succeed!" she breathed.

"We'll do the very best that we can, Miss Sloan," said Dick, "so return to your home and take things as philosophically as possible."

"Thank you, Mr. Slater! And, now, when will you make the attempt to rescue George?"

"I think we will make the attempt to-morrow night. I hardly think it would be wise to attempt it to-night, and I am confident they will not—will not—make any move toward executing him to-morrow. It is usually the case



that a trial is given, and the probabilities are that he would not be given the trial under three or four days."

Lizzie had paled somewhat, but she bore up bravely. "I don't think there is any danger that they will do anything so soon as to-morrow," she agreed; "but I think you had better make the attempt as early as to-morrow night."

"We shall do so, Miss Sloan."

"At what hour will you approach Savannah?" Lizzie asked. "I will come out and guide you into the city, as I know a way of going and coming that is not known to the British."

"Be at a point a mile out from the city at ten o'clock," said Dick; "we will be along at just about that hour."

"Very well; I will be there."

After a little more conversation Lizzie took her departure, feeling much encouraged and quite hopeful. Dick had offered to accompany her, but she said that she did not mind the ride alone, at all, and rode away, with a cheery "good-by" to all.

She reached her home in safety, a little more than an hour later and told her parents what she had done. They were well pleased and were more hopeful than they had been, though Mr. Sloan shook his head and said that it would be an extremely difficult matter to effect the escape of George Grady.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CAPTAIN RAVENCRAFT CALLS ON LIZZIE SLOAN.

About all that was talked about in Savannah the next day was the capture of the terrible "rebel," George Grady, the man who had termed himself the Avenger. The majority of the citizens were Tories, and, of course, they rejoiced on account of the capture; but there were a number of families where genuine sorrow was felt. The patriots had been well pleased during the time that George Grady had been making it so lively for the redcoats; it did them good to know that there was some one to worry the enemy. And since the advent of the "Liberty Boys" the British had been worried even more. All the patriots hoped that the Avenger would succeed in escaping, though they did not have much hope of this. They realized that he was such an important prisoner that extraordinary precautions would be observed to prevent his escape.

Captain Ravencraft was perhaps the proudest man in

Savannah. He was given the credit of the capture of George Grady, and he was forced, again and again, to tell how he came to make the capture. He was careful to hold to his story that he had seen Grady going along the street and that his actions being suspicious he had decided to capture the man, and make him give an account of himself. He acknowledged that he did not at the time have any suspicion that the man in question was the terrible fellow known as the Avenger, but thought he might be a "rebel" spy, but this did not detract from the glory of the capture, and the worthy captain was invited to drink so often that he soon began to feel quite hilarious and even more elated than he otherwise would have felt. The result was that about ten o'clock he put into execution a plan which he had formed the night before when he had effected the capture of George Grady. Having made up his mind that the time had come to put his plan into effect, he set out for the home of Lizzie Sloan.

Lizzie knew that the captain had been in command of the party that captured her lover, and when she saw him approaching, although she hated him worse now than she had before—and she had detested him before—she felt that under the circumstances, knowing that the captain knew George Grady had been in her house, she had best see him and hear what he had to say.

The captain, exhilarated by his capture of the great George Grady, and by the liquor which he had imbibed, and feeling confident that he held the winning hand in his game for the heart and hand of beautiful Lizzie Sloan, came in as bold as brass and greeted the girl with the most extravagant of bows. He lost no time in plunging right into the business which brought him.

"Miss Sloan," he said, "I suppose you are aware that I had the extreme pleasure of being the man who effected the capture of George Grady, last night?"

Lizzie grew pale, and an almost fierce light shone in her beautiful eyes as she gazed at the officer. "Yes, I am aware of it, sir," she said, in a calm, but repressed voice. She wished that she might have the privilege of telling the captain just what she felt regarding the matter, but she did not dare do so. Her hands were tied and she must be calm and say nothing rash.

"I supposed that you saw us when we made him prisoner," the captain went on; "he had just come out of your house, you know, and I judged that you were looking. He is your lover, is he not?"

Lizzie flushed and an angry light shone in her eyes. The captain's tone was insulting, but she was forced to hold herself in check and did not say anything in reply, for



felt that not only she, herself, but her parents as well were in the captain's power. If he were to tell that George Grady had come out of the Sloan home just prior to his capture, the redcoats would persecute them for harboring "rebel" and might even hang her father. Lizzie had wondered why it was that Captain Ravencraft had not told her that he had seen the Avenger come forth from the Sloan house, but now she was beginning to have a suspicion of the truth. She thought she could guess the reason; he wished to use this knowledge as a threat to force her to accede to his suit and accept his hand.

"I don't know by what right you ask such a question, Captain Ravencraft!" said Lizzie, with as much show of sentiment as she dared manifest.

The captain laughed. "Oh, well, don't trouble yourself with an answer, then," he said; "it is a self-evident proposition—that that doesn't cut any figure. George Grady will hang to-morrow, and as that disposes of him effectually you will be open for another suitor, and I have come to ask if you will accept me as such?"

"Captain Ravencraft, I have already more than once told you that I could never learn to love you, so why——" "There, there; hold on!" interrupted the captain; "that is when Grady was in the race. He is out of it now and you must look at the matter with that knowledge before you. Don't be hasty in deciding; take your time. And remember this," here the captain lowered his voice and there was a menace in the tone: "If you refuse to accept me as a suitor for your hand I shall not hesitate to make known the fact that your father has been harboring rebels, and you know what that would mean—he would be hanged!"

Lizzie paled. "Surely you would not do that, Captain Ravencraft?" she remarked.

"Surely I would and will—if you refuse to accept me as a suitor."

There was no mistaking the fact that the captain was deadly earnest. His manner showed it, and then the girl knew he was capable of anything.

She was silent for a few moments, thinking, and then she said: "Give me time to consider this matter, Captain Ravencraft; it is so sudden, and I—I——"

"You shall have two days to think it over, Miss Sloan, and then if you refuse to accept me as a suitor for your hand I shall go straight to General Prevost with the news that your father has been harboring rebels. Don't let this escape your memory when you are giving the matter consideration—for I swear that if you do not give me

"That will do; you have made threats enough for one time, Captain Ravencraft," said Lizzie, with dignity. "Kindly go your way and return in two days for your answer."

"You needn't think that your father can get away in the meantime," said the captain, with a malicious smile; "I shall keep a watch on this house, and if he should try to leave he will be arrested at once, so beware how you try any tricks."

"Good morning!" said Lizzie, coldly, and the captain took the hint and his departure.

"Curse her impudence!" the captain muttered as he walked away; "she has plenty of spirit, but I'll take some of that out of her by and by. She shall be my wife in spite of herself! She hasn't given up hope that her lover may escape death, but about to-morrow, when he does the highland fling on empty air at the end of a stout rope, she will change her mind and I judge that then she will be more tractable and more willing to listen to reason."

As soon as the captain had gone, Lizzie called her parents into the room and told them what the captain had said. Mrs. Sloan was greatly alarmed for the safety of her husband, but Mr. Sloan was more angry than alarmed.

"The cowardly scoundrel!" he muttered, clenching his strong hands; "I would like to get my fingers on his throat once! I would choke the life out of him with as little compunction as if he were a yellow cur!"

"What shall we do?" breathed Mrs. Sloan, who did not think this plan a practical one.

"Wait and hope for the best," replied Lizzie. "Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' may succeed in rescuing George to-night, and then we can decide upon a course of action."

It was decided that all they could do was to wait and see how matters went.

As soon as it was dark, Lizzie mounted Selim and made her way out of the city and up the road a distance of a mile, where she took up a position in the edge of the timber and waited patiently for the coming of the "Liberty Boys."

She had not been there more than twenty minutes when she heard the sound of hoofbeats. A few minutes later four horsemen appeared, and, recognizing them in the moonlight as being Dick Slater and three of his companions, Lizzie rode out and joined them.

The four greeted the brave girl pleasantly and then rode onward with her as a guide. "I am afraid it is going



tempt to do, Mr. Slater," Lizzie remarked, in a troubled voice, with a glance up at the moon.

"There is a cloud coming up in the east, however, if you will notice, Miss Sloan," said Dick; "I rather think that the moon will be obscured within the course of an hour or so and then we will have it dark enough for our purpose."

"Oh, I hope that such may be the case!" was the fervent reply of the girl.

She led the way through the timber, unerringly, having left the main road, and succeeded in piloting the four into the city without having attracted the attention of any of the British sentinels. Lizzie led the way to the stable at the rear of her home, going by way of the alley, and she felt sure that no one had seen their coming. Dismounting, they tied their horses and made their way to the house, entering by way of the rear door, and Dick Slater and his three comrades—who were Bob Estabrook, Mark Morrison and Sam Sanderson—were greeted pleasantly by Lizzie's parents.

The four remained at the house of the Sloans till midnight, and then feeling that the time had come for them to make the attempt to rescue George Grady, they slipped out of the house by the back way and started on their dangerous undertaking, followed by prayers for their success from the lips and hearts of the members of the Sloan family. It was now quite dark, a heavy cloud having obscured the moon and this at least was favorable.

Dick knew where the prison was, for he had been in Savannah before, and he led the way straight thither. Pausing under the walls of the building the three began to make their preparations for attempting the rescue of George Grady.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE RESCUE AND ESCAPE.

Dick had brought a coil of thin but very strong rope, and with this thrown over his head and tucked under his arm, he made his way to the corner of the prison and began climbing the waterspout. It was made of wood and was quite large, and to Dick, who had been raised in the timber and was an expert climber, it presented no insuperable difficulties in the way of his ascent.

Up, up he climbed, the other youths standing against

just make out his form in the darkness and they felt confident that any one at a little distance would be unable to see him.

Up, up Dick climbed and at last reached the roof, which, to his great joy, he found was flat—that is to say, it sloped only just enough to shed water.

Uncoiling the rope Dick lowered one end to the ground. Bob Estabrook caught hold of the rope and was quickly pulled to a place by Dick's side on the roof. Again the rope was lowered and Mark Morrison was hauled up. Dick and Bob both pulling on the rope, thus making it easy work for them. Again the rope was lowered and a few minutes later Sam Sanderson stood by them.

So far, so good. They were on the roof of the prison and were ready to begin work. Their first act was to look for a trap-door, but they soon found that there was none.

"It will be necessary to enter at one of the windows," said Dick. "I will be the one to go. Bob, you and Mark lower me down."

Dick placed his foot in a loop tied at the end of the rope and then Bob and Mark took hold of the rope and eased their brave comrade over the edge of the roof and down the side of the building. The two "Liberty Boys" lowered Dick till his knee rested on the window-sill. Here he rested for a few moments, and then withdrawing his foot from the loop in the rope Dick raised the window and made ready to enter the room.

The youth had made sure that the room was empty, so had no hesitation in entering.

As soon as he was inside he paused and stood and listened for a few moments, to see if the noise of the raising of the window had attracted the attention of any one. All was silent, save for the measured tread of the sentinel in what was evidently a hall, outside the room, but within the building, of course.

Dick pondered the situation, and decided that he would have to overcome the guard the first thing. Having so decided he was prompt to act. He moved across to the door and tried it. It was not locked, and this was just as Dick would have it. He waited till the guard passed the door when he opened it quickly and silently and stepped out into the hall, behind the man. A quick glance up and down the hall showed Dick that there was no one to observe his actions, and drawing his pistol he stepped quickly forward on tiptoe and dealt the guard a terrible blow on the head with the butt of the weapon. The man sank to the floor without a groan, stricken senseless by the stroke.



took a string of keys which dangled from the guard's belt and made his way along the hall, unlocking each door that he came to and looking in. As it was dark in the rooms Dick called the name of his friend in cautious tones, but sufficiently loud for him to hear if he were there, and in the fourth room he visited the youth received a response. It was George Grady, the Avenger, sure enough, as Dick knew by the voice, and he entered and after quickly explaining the situation, he cut the rope which bound the prisoner's arms, and together they stole out of the cell and along the hall. The guard still lay where he had fallen, and was unconscious.

The two entered the room through which Dick had passed in entering, and after taking the precaution to lock the door they made their way to the window. Dick explained how they were to make their escape, and then George Grady went first and was lifted up on the top of the prison. Dick followed, and as he reached the roof the sound of an alarm was heard. It came from within the prison; the guard had probably returned to consciousness and given the alarm.

"Quick!" exclaimed Dick; "we have no time to lose! We must get down from here and away before the redcoats in general are aroused, when it would be difficult for us to make our way through the streets without being detected and captured or killed."

One after another the four companions of Dick Slater were lowered to the ground, and then, having made the rope fast to the cornice, Dick slid down after the fashion of a fireman coming down from upstairs in the engine-room when an alarm has been sounded.

He took the lead and hastened away, but at the first corner they were met, face to face, by a party of redcoats to the number of a dozen. The leader of the party, as could be seen by the light from a street lamp near by, was Captain Ravencraft, and as he and George Grady caught sight of each other a cry of rage escaped them simultaneously—though there was a note of fear in the captain's tone as well. The next instant the swords of the two clashed together, Dick having given Grady his sword which had been left below when he went up into the prison. At the same instant Dick and his three "Liberty Boys" attacked the other redcoats, and for a few moments the liveliest kind of a battle was fought there in the street.

Dick and his comrades were desperate, however, and were, moreover, terrible hand-to-hand fighters, and they had taken the initiative and gotten in the first blows, and this determined the result of the encounter practically, be-

escaped did so only by taking to their heels and running like good fellows.

The fiercest battle was between George Grady and Captain Ravencraft. The latter, feeling that his life was at stake, brought all his skill into play and for a time was enabled to hold his own with the terrible Avenger. Then, too, he was animated by hatred and disappointment; he realized that if George Grady succeeded in escaping he (the captain) would never succeed in winning the beautiful Lizzie Sloan for a wife, and he was determined to kill the man whom he knew was a most dangerous rival.

But he was unequal to the task. George Grady was too much for him and suddenly there was a swish! and the sword of the Avenger cut the captain's head off, slick and clean.

"Thus perish all such scoundrels!" cried George, and then he accompanied the "Liberty Boys" in their flight from the place. The encounter had occupied but a few minutes, but the alarm had gone out, and the streets were beginning to fill with the redcoats. Fortunately, however, it was at the time of night when it was darkest, and when the men suddenly aroused from their sleep were dullest, and the five daring patriots succeeded, after several narrow escapes, in reaching the home of the Sloans. To say that Lizzie and her parents were delighted when they saw that the "Liberty Boys" had succeeded in freeing George Grady, is stating the case very mildly. Lizzie leaped into the arms of her lover and wept for joy, but soon got control of her feelings and told him he must not run the risk of again being captured by remaining. "You must go at once—you and your friends!" she cried. "Captain Ravencraft has placed a watch on the house, and they might discover your presence here, when all would be lost!"

Then Mrs. Sloan told George of the threat which Captain Ravencraft had made—that if Lizzie did not consent to accept him as a suitor for her hand he would tell General Prevost that Mr. Sloan was harboring "rebels," and have him hanged, and asked his advice regarding what they should do.

"Do?" exclaimed George, with a grim smile. "Why, stay right here and take matters coolly. Captain Ravencraft will never put his threat into execution; in fact, he will never again bother Lizzie. He is dead!"

"Dead!" exclaimed all three in unison. "Well, thank goodness for that!" added Mrs. Sloan. "I am not bloodthirsty, but I am truly glad that Captain Ravencraft is dead."

"He deserved his fate," agreed Mr. Sloan, drawing a



"D-did you—did you—slay him, George?" asked Lizzie.

"I did, Lizzie," was the quiet reply; "I overcame him in a fair duel and killed him. His life was mine, anyway, as he had forfeited it to me from another time when we fought, but he saved himself for the time being in flight. Had I known that he had been persecuting you, Lizzie, I fear I should have saved him for the future and tortured him. He died too easy a death."

Our story is practically finished. The five, feeling that it would be unsafe to remain in the city while such a hue and cry was on, as a result of the escape of George Grady, bade good-by to their friends, the Sloans, and mounting their horses—George riding Selim—they made their way out of the city by the route used in entering it when Lizzie was their guide.

George Grady's sister Alice recovered the full use of all her mental faculties in time, and at the close of the war married a fine young fellow who lived in the vicinity of her old home. Of course, George Grady and Lizzie Sloan were married when the war was over and they lived happily for many years and reared a family that was a credit to that part of the country. The boys, especially, loved to hear the story of their father's terrible battles with the redcoats, aided by the brave "Liberty Boys." Ethel Mumford

married happily also; her liking for the brave Dick Slater not having been so deep as to cause her a broken heart.

As for the "Liberty Boys," being full of "push" and energy, and always bound to get where things were liveliest, and there was the most fighting to do, they remained in the vicinity of Savannah for a few weeks and then went and joined forces with General Marion, the "Swamp Fox," and made things lively for the redcoats in the new field of action, the same as they had in the old.

THE END.

The next number (58) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' DESPERATE CHARGE; OR, WITH 'MAD ANTHONY' AT STONY POINT," by Harry Moore.

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